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WINTER 2003

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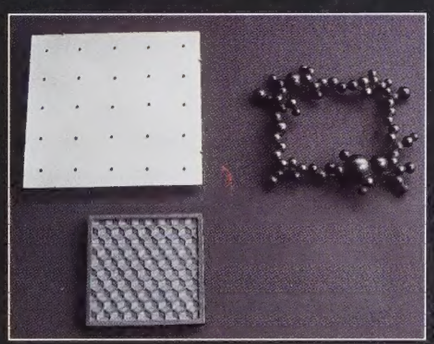

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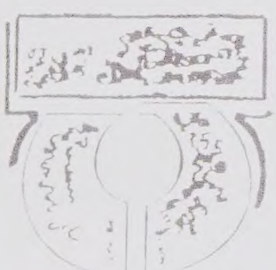

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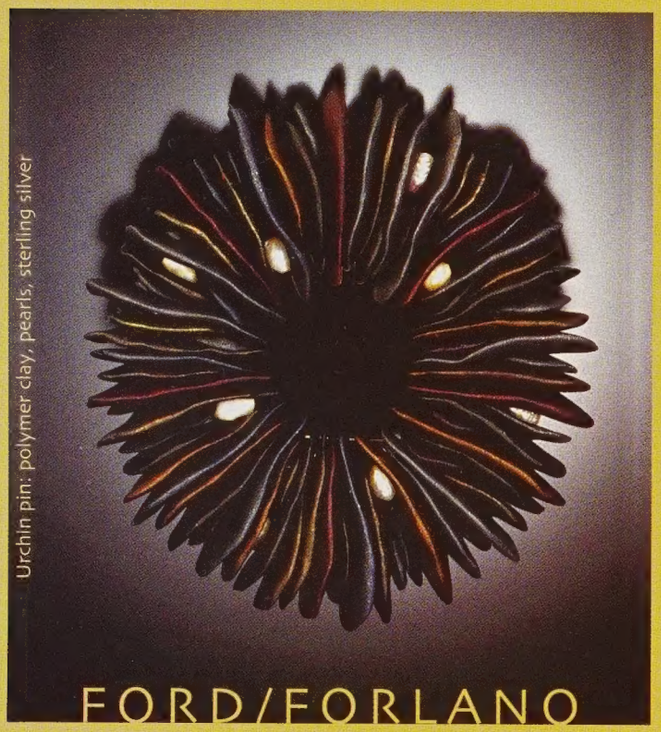

Urchin pin: polymer clay, pearls, sterling silver

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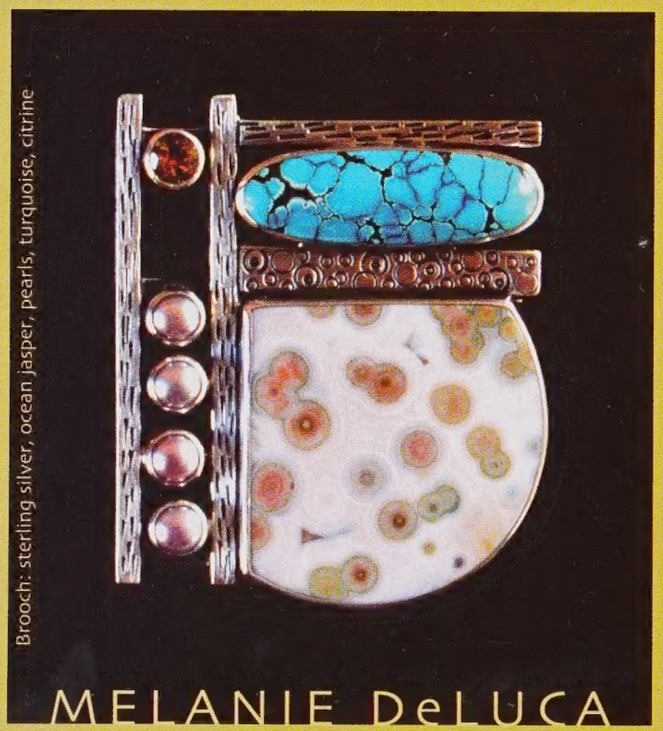

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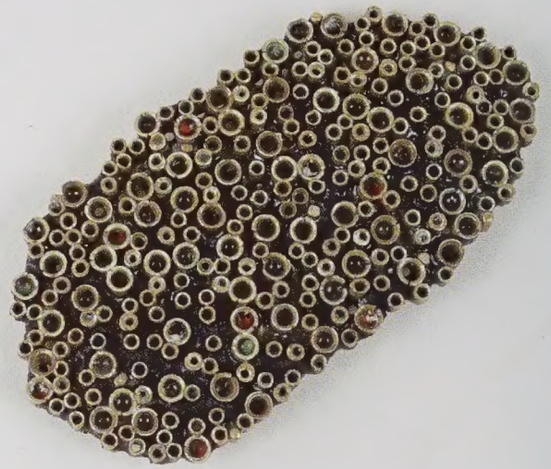

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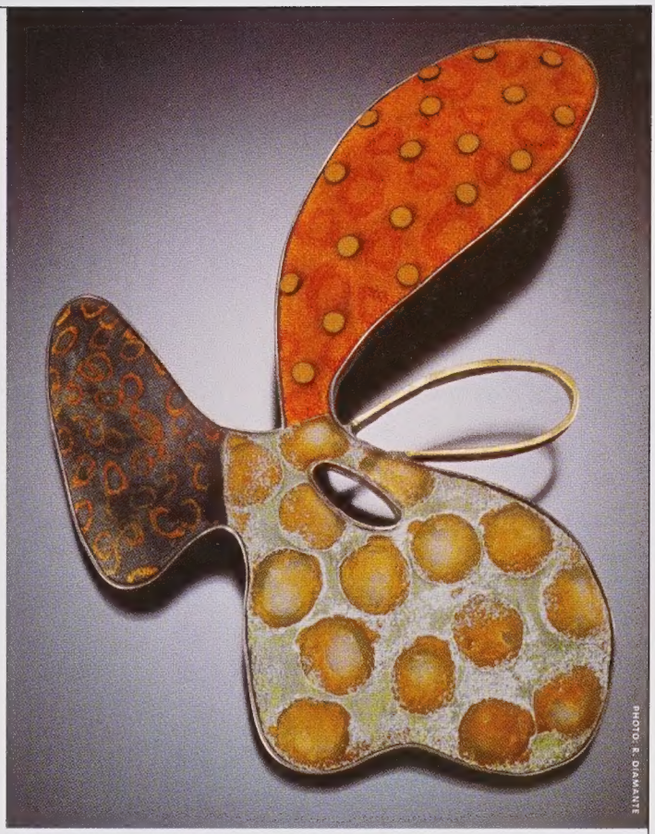

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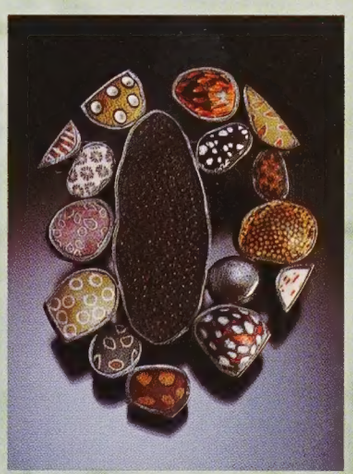

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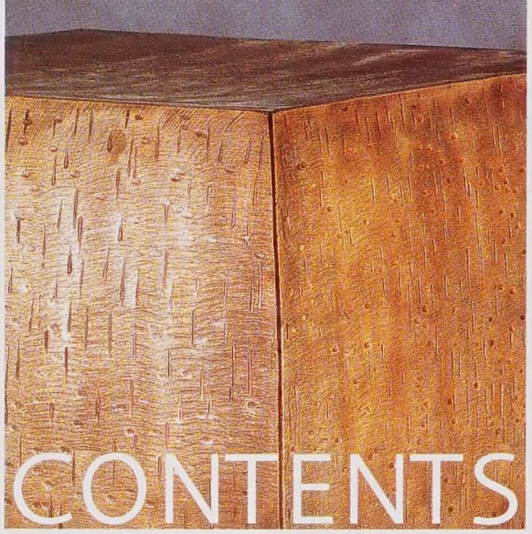

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top
Gary S. Magakis
Bronze Cube Table, 2002
bronze, steel, copper
22 x 16 x 16"
Photo: Jerome Lukowicz

right
Lee Sauder
Nyamakala 11, 2001
bloom iron
35 x 11"
Photo: Ellen Martin

cover and left detail
Steven Ford and David Forlano
Pebble Galaxy (wall piece with removable pin), 2002
bronze, sterling silver, polymer clay, glass, coral, shell, magnets
diameter 13"
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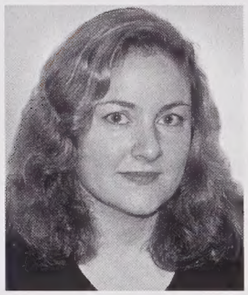

After decades of debate and protest, the walls separating craft, art, and design have finally begun to crumble. Regardless of how invested institutions may be in upholding such divisions, artists have increasingly created works that traverse media and formats, confounding any attempt at categorization. This issue of *Metalsmith* abounds in examples that stretch the perceived parameters of metalsmithing and intersect with the fields of sculpture, painting, furniture, and architecture.

Trained as painters, our cover artists Steven Ford and David Forlano derive their main inspiration from popular music and contemporary art. Enlisting polymer clay, a material long associated with hobbyists, they create dynamic works that transcend the medium. Metal serves to highlight their vibrant use of colored clay, which they handle in a painterly fashion.

Lee Sauder's iron works are decidedly sculptural, even when they assume the functional form of swords. Reviving the centuries-old practice of bloomery smelting, a method of releasing iron from its ore, he revels in the properties of the material to create evocative three-dimensional statements.

Metal appears in many unlikely guises—including marquetry, lacquer, and tree branches—in the furniture showcased in "Practical Matter." In pieces inspired by anything from the simplicity of Shaker design to the excess of the Louis XV period, the adaptability of the medium is beautifully demonstrated. Function meets fancy in works that knowingly engage historical and contemporary prototypes.

Similarly, the works included in the recent "Jewelry from Painting" exhibition, reviewed here, translate two-dimensional art into the metalsmith's language. Throughout this entire issue—from Andrew Goss's cement jewelry (see "Studio Visit") to the various unorthodox materials and treatments found in the reviewed exhibitions "Zero Karat," "Material Explorations," and "Metal Under Glass"—one can locate numerous works that redefine the boundaries of the metalsmith's art. This creative cross-fertilization lends the field its current energy, and will certainly ensure its vitality in the years to come...

SR

METALSMITH

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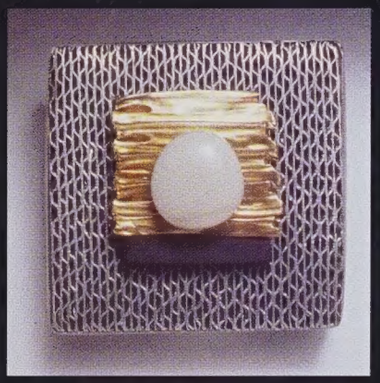

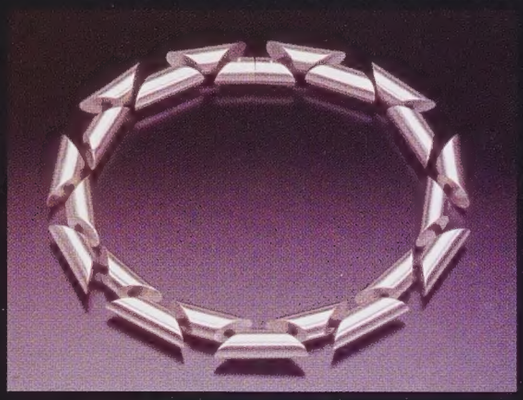

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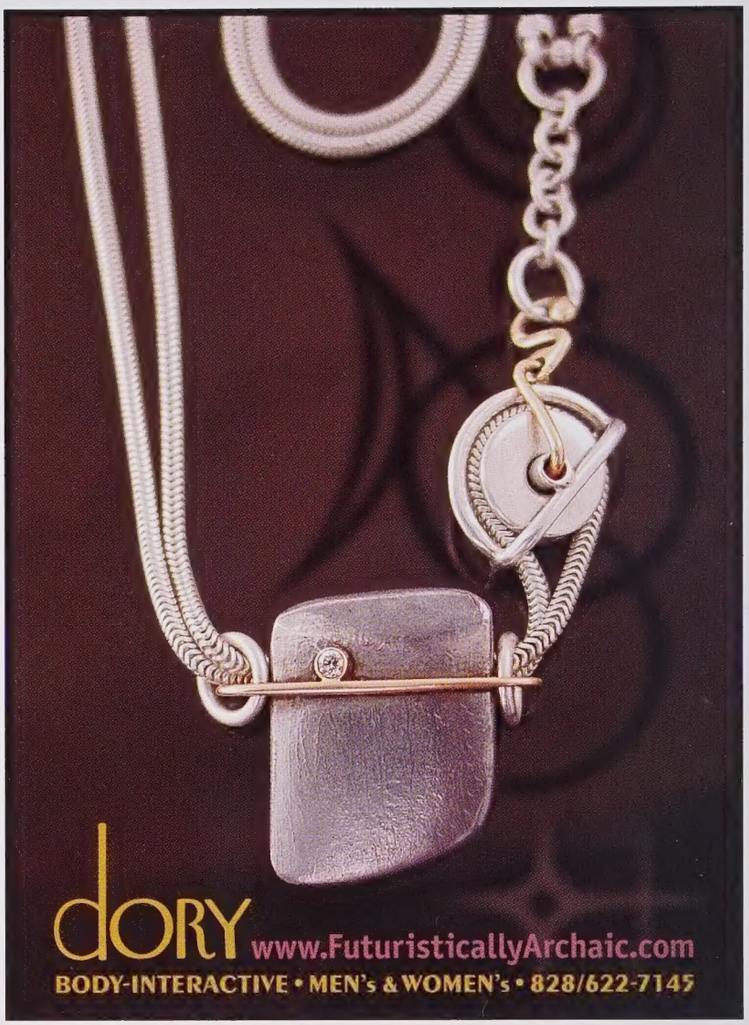

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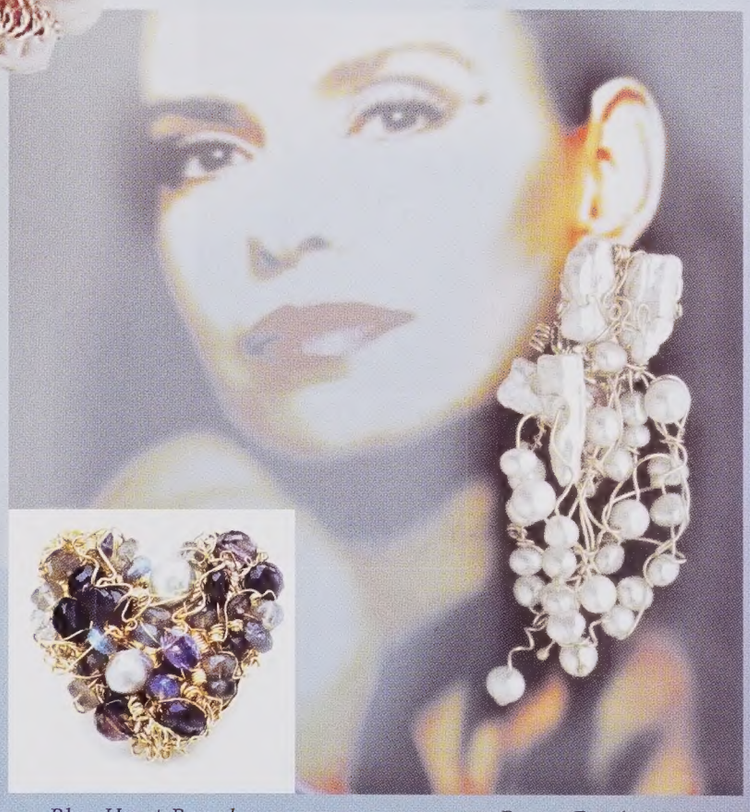

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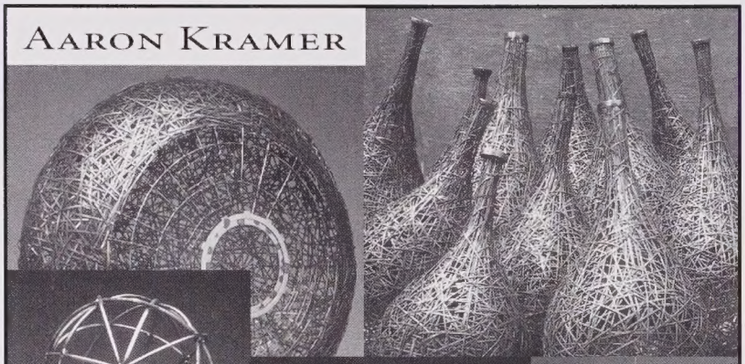

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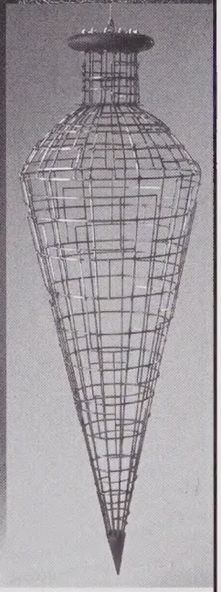

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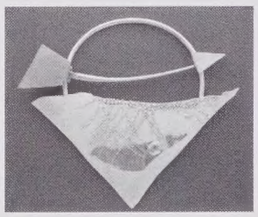

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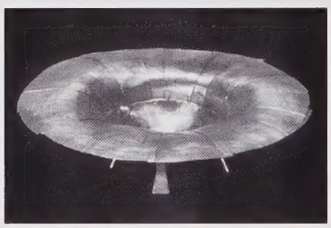

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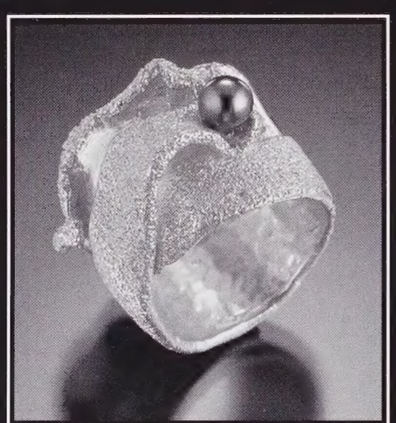

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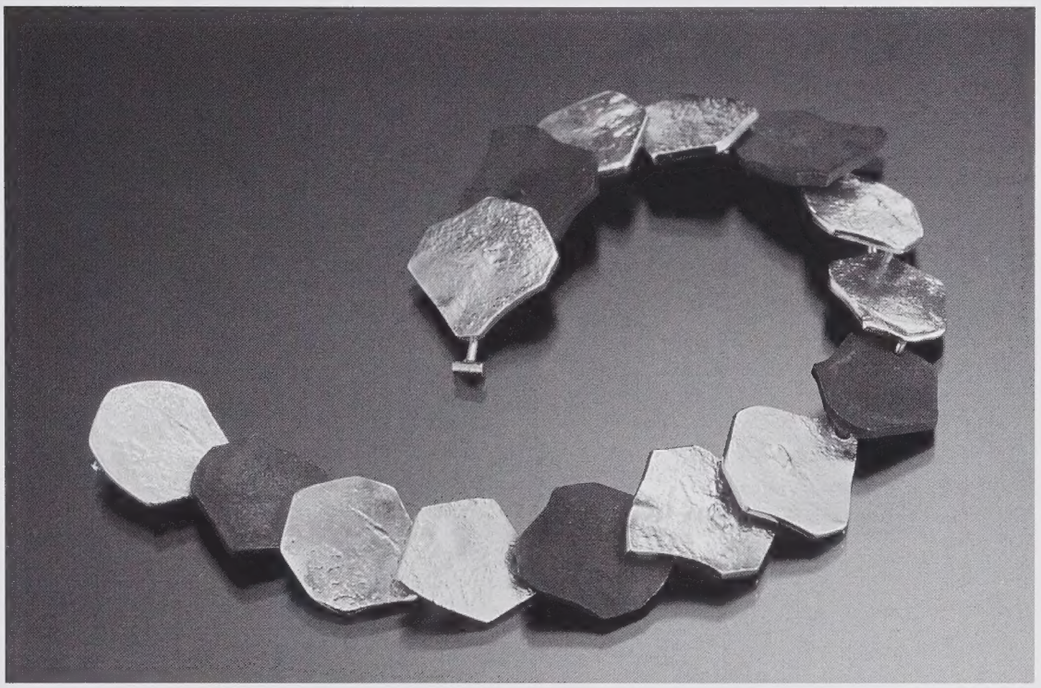

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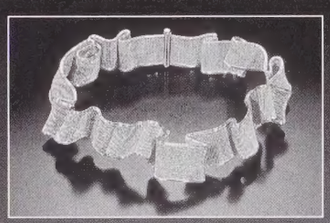
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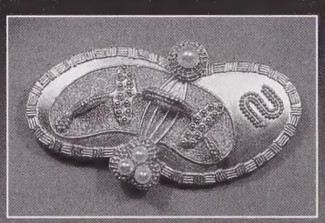
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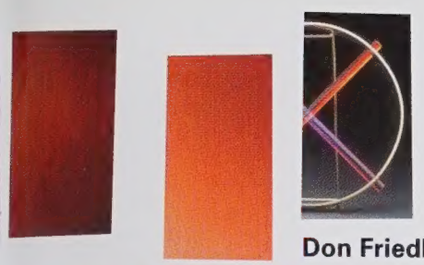

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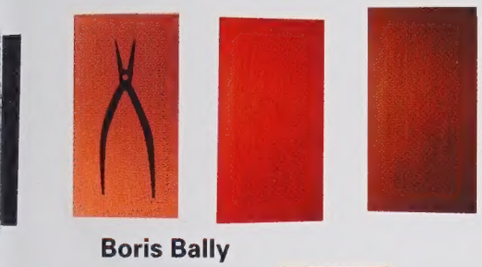

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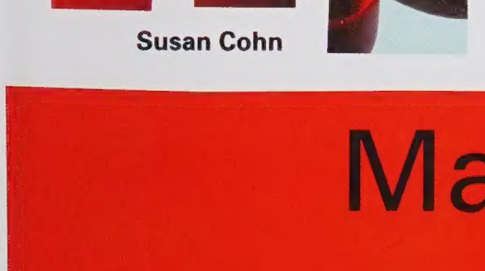

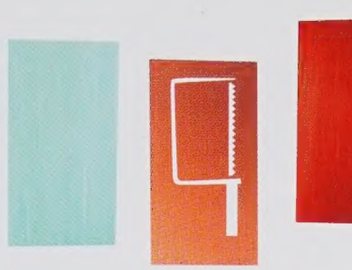

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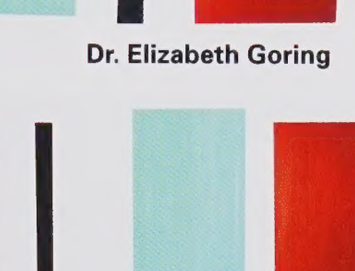

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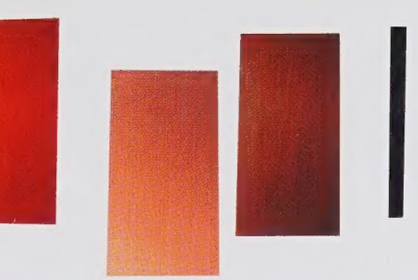

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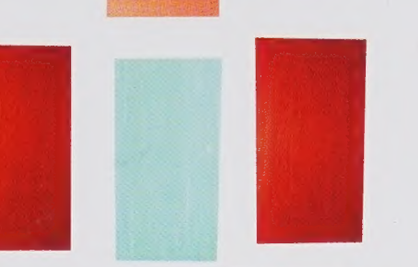
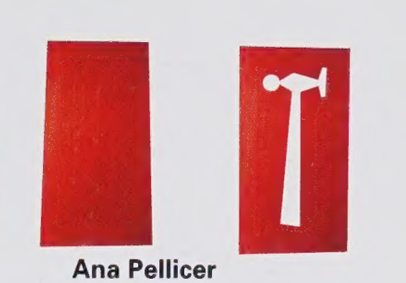
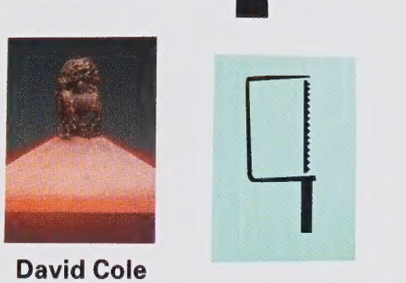
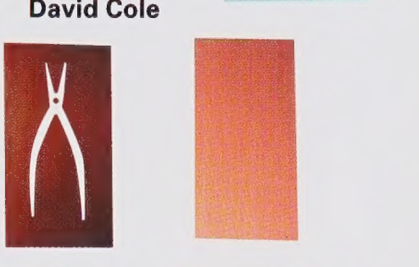


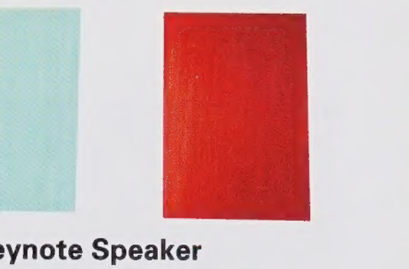
David Cole



Ana Pellicer







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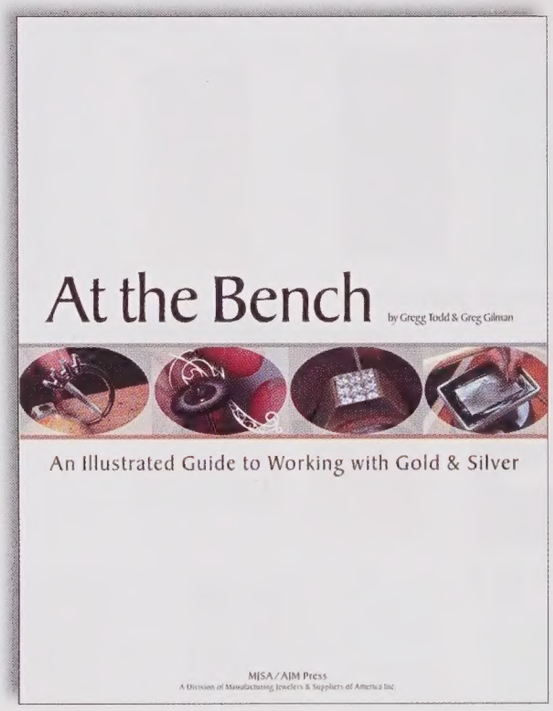

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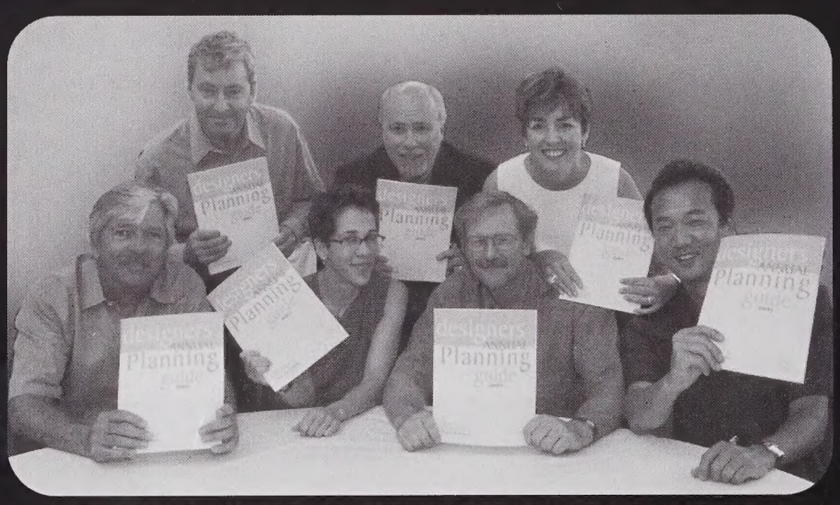

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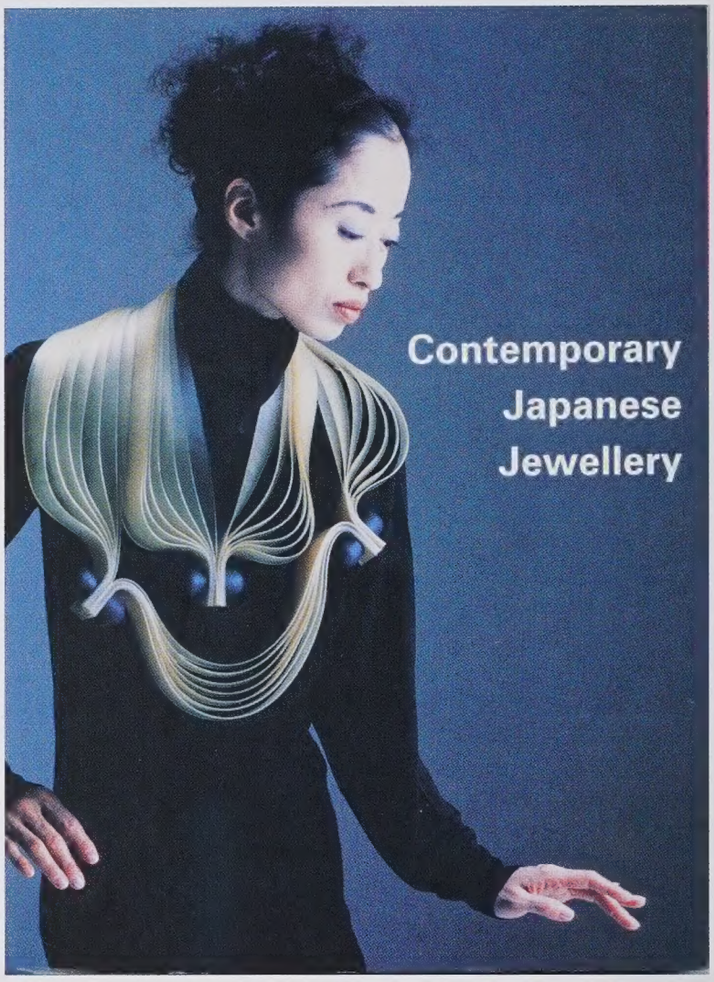
BOOK REVIEW

Contemporary Japanese Jewellery

Simon Fraser and Toyojiro Hida

Merrell Publishers in association with The Crafts Council, 2001

by Janet Koplos



In order to introduce largely unknown contemporary Japanese jewelry to the West, British jeweler Simon Fraser, working with the advice of Toyojiro Hida, then a curator at the Crafts Gallery of the National Museum of Modern Art in Tokyo, organized a traveling exhibition titled "Contemporary Japanese Jewellery," which opened in London in 2001. Fraser used as a starting point Hida's 1995 show "Contemporary Jewelry: Exploration by Thirty Japanese Artists," and Hida contributes a valuable essay to this exhibition's catalogue as well. Fraser has written a history of Japanese jewelry and Hida an analysis; illustrated biographies of each artist follow.

The paperback catalogue is handsomely designed and well illustrated. It is only unfortunate that some photos are repeated numerous times; I'd have preferred to see additional works or views instead. Characteristics shared by all Japanese art are present here: sensitivity to materials, graphic clarity, fine workmanship, subtlety. The selections favor Zen austerity far more often than the equally Japanese attraction to the baroque or, recently, pop; Zen tends to be the Western interpretation of what's "really Japanese." But not to complain: there's lots of beautiful and interesting work in this catalogue, and it's an education for those of us who couldn't see the show.

Fraser's essay, "Cultural History of Personal Adornment in Japan" makes clear the very different basis from which contemporary jewelry has arisen in that country. Gold rings (only in ancient times) and hair combs constitute the only traditional forms of adornment a Westerner would recognize (braided cords and toggles, such as the astonishing and delightful *netsuke* have no counterparts in the West). But after Japan "opened" to the world in the mid-nineteenth century, Western jewelry of all sorts was adopted, either added to kimono and other traditional attire or paired with newly fashionable suits and gowns. Westerners working as teachers or as advisors to factories (Christopher Dresser was one) helped to introduce foreign concepts. By the late nineteenth century such business institutions as Mikimoto Pearls and Hattori Seiko watch company had been established.

Closer to the present, the necessary brevity of Fraser's account becomes more troublesome. He spends much time worrying about the acceptance of jewelry as art in Japan (although the same could be asked of Europe or America today), without discussing the fact that "fine art" as a category is itself a Western notion. There are gaps in the story: the founding of a jewelry magazine in 1965; the involvement of women in jewelry before recent times; the development of commercial jewelry; the connection between increased knowledge of international activity in the 1960s and the simultaneous improvement of the economy in Japan; the career limitations on Japanese women and how they shaped the "atelier system," are all issues that beg for more discussion.

However, Fraser's account of department store galleries is very good. He is right about the different nature of "critical" artworks, which are far more reflective and less aggressive in Japan than in the West. His observation that the brooch, not worn directly on the body, has been the easiest Western ornament for the Japanese to adopt, is quite sensitive (although he doesn't acknowledge the prohibition against altering the body that has made pierced ears slow to catch on). He quite rightly notes the enormous material diversity of Japanese culture and its unusual "aesthetic of the temporary" (some things, such as cherry blossoms, are more valued because they are so short-lived). The continuity of certain approaches as folding (e.g., origami) is also accurately appraised. But the Mingei aesthetic is not as well pinned down, and in one example is linked to the use of cardboard, which is a questionable analogy.

Hida's essay, naturally, is written much more confidently. What's extraordinary about this essay, though, is that Hida has adopted a Western style of criticism so adeptly that his comments on exhibitions, themes, etc., are often far harsher than we American craft writers allow. This, in the land of indirection and social propriety! He writes of a handful of artists with deep engagement, looking at their forms and techniques and materials within the context of modern

social, material, and even political culture, and contemporary psychology as well. It's an amazing performance.

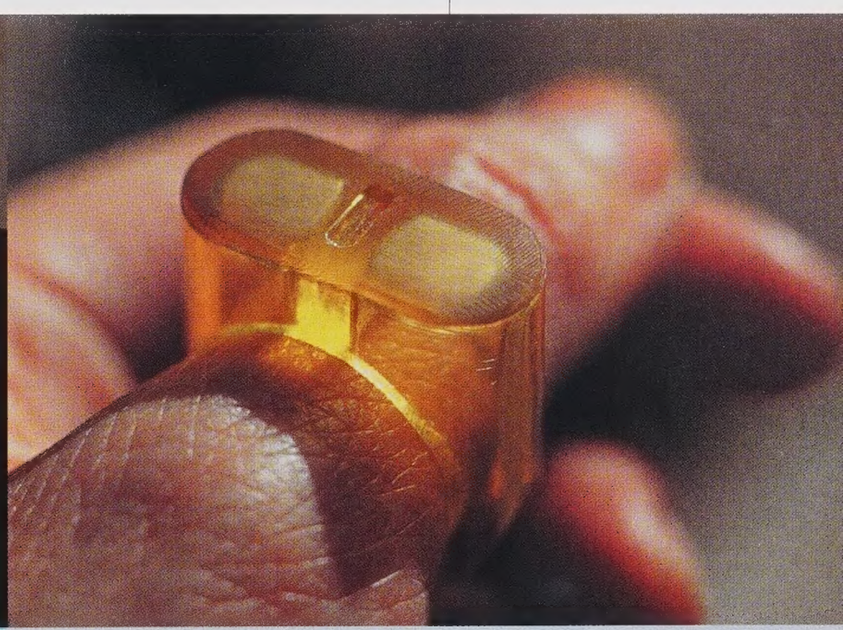
Hida also tells a tale of an exhibition set up by foreigners on a theme they based on a misunderstanding of Japanese youth culture. He describes how one jeweler made a successful response to the theme and explains what only someone deeply familiar with Japan would understand. It has to do with social classes, conformity and schoolgirl prostitution, among other things, and it's probably worth buying this catalogue just to read this story! Hida's point is that Japanese are often very good at fulfilling foreigners' expectations, whatever they might be. Hida's objectivity and sense of measure are remarkable. His account provokes both thoughts of some Japanese curators who've made a career out of meeting foreigners' expectations (whether or not it serves the artists) and the suspicion that Hida might worry about Fraser going wrong, as well.

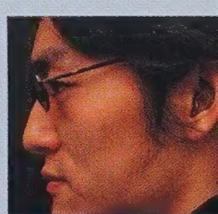
Hida goes on to talk about shifts in culture and fashion, and laments that innovation has inexplicably faded in the jewelry field. He explains the concepts of *do* ("way"—used for such aesthetic practices as tea ceremony and such non-artistic activities as wrestling) and *kata* ("form"—the perfection of posture, technique, and movement in these "ways"). Hida argues they can be regarded as bodies of aesthetics that have been distilled out of the Japanese collective unconscious. He guesses that as "artistic" innovation faded, jewelry design was turning into a "way," and the result has been that artists have adapted traditions in a new manner leading—to his surprise—to a new blossoming in jewelry. What a delightful contrast to the many contemporary American art critics who are so utterly certain of their own omniscience that they would never admit to surprise!

A section of the catalogue seeks patterns of material use and finds novelty in lacquer (including a traditional armorer's technique), and a great deal of work in paper, but less work in bamboo or plastic than might be expected. Textiles are used for some jewelry and so is leather (no mention is made of leather's ambiguous status when Buddhism was more dominant, or that felt is a relatively new material since wool was not available in Japan until modern times). In the illustrated biographies, among the most striking or provocative works are Teruo Akatsu's dustball-on-wire necklaces, Shinichiro Kobayashi's camphorwood jewelry with a fragrance, Tomomi Matsunaga's softly curving bamboo bracelets, Noriko Nagano's undulant necklaces of clear urethane rubber, Aya Nakayama's corpulent objects coated in beautifully mottled lacquer, Kana Takenaka's neckpieces of irregular tubes covered with newspaper, and Sae Yoshizawa's bracelets and rings made of pleated photographs.

All in all, the book is a treasure of previously unavailable information. One only wishes for more. ⧗

Janet Koplos, a former resident of Japan, is a New York–based art critic and senior editor for *Art in America*.





The Work of Paul McClure

by Susan Barry

Cells, (brooches), 1999-2002
silver, gold, copper, resin, neodymium magnets, glass petri dishes
18 x 12 x 1"

Mounted in Paul McClure's silver pendant, *Alveoli*, are two pearls taken from a necklace his mother left him when she died of cancer. The work is a memento of her death, in memory of her life. Shaped like the bronchial branches of the lungs, the pendant references the tiny sacs that exchange oxygen and carbon dioxide from the blood. Over time, the pendant's black oxide wears against the body, revealing a highly polished silver surface; thus the contrast between the pearls (a symbol of tears) and the pendant fades. This process lasts about two years—the same period of time the Victorians mourned the death of a loved one.

Alveoli is part of a series titled "Memento Mori." The Latin motto ("remember, you must die") has often been inscribed on mourning jewelry throughout history. The earliest recorded example of *memento mori* jewelry is the bequest of Richard II (1366–1400); he left a gold ring to each of nine executors. Mourning jewelry became popular in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and was the height of fashion during the Victorian era. These pieces represent a sense of loss, taking on meaning beyond its form; they awaken our memories.

In the work of Paul McClure, universal structures, memory, ritual, and science forge an intimate alliance between knowing and believing. This relationship is illustrated in a series of magnetic brooches titled "Cells," composed of more than 20 cellular forms, that celebrates life through the formal language of science. Each cell illustrated plays a role in combating disease and regenerating life. As McClure rebuilds his own life, he leaves us reminders, mementos, of the internal nature of life and triggers in us the capability to believe in an idea beyond form.

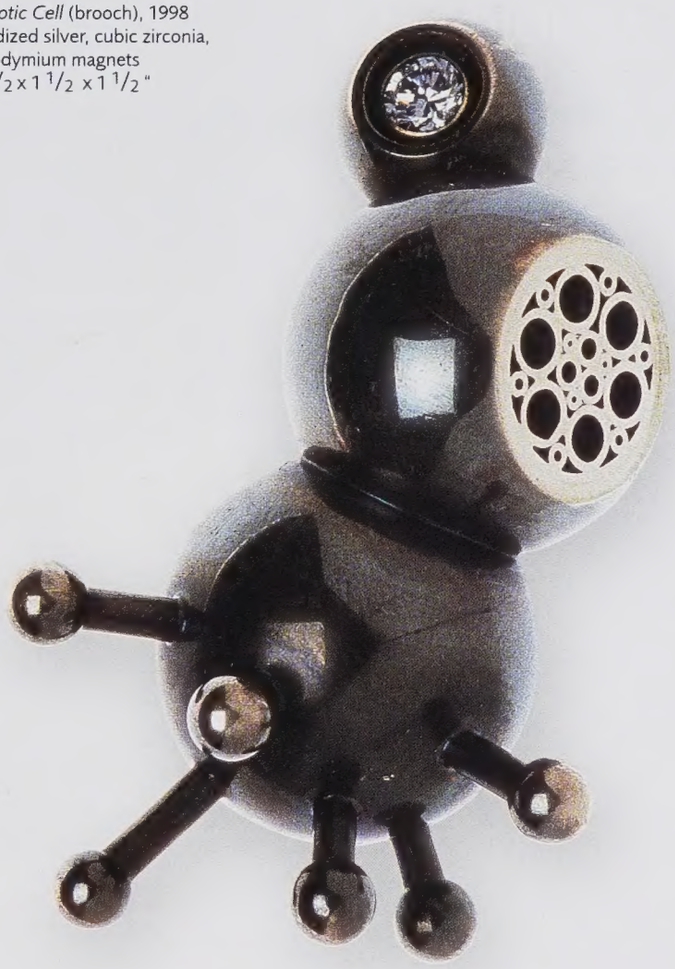
In a recent solo exhibition in Barcelona that coincided with the fourteenth international AIDS conference, McClure introduced HIV to the *Cells* collection. His *HIV Viruses* derive from a 1994 work, commissioned for an AIDS benefit, consisting of 500 brooches clustered together in a magnetic field. Each guest was invited to take a "virus" from the sculpture, thus altering the sculpture's shape to mimic the behavior of the AIDS virus. Like the earlier work, McClure's *HIV Virus* brooches help raise awareness about AIDS, and foster a community of tolerance and compassion.

Paul McClure's jewelry is a statement of faith. He places value both in systems of knowing and personal experience. Whether based on science, religion, or history, his works remind us that these systems serve only to describe our human condition. ⧗

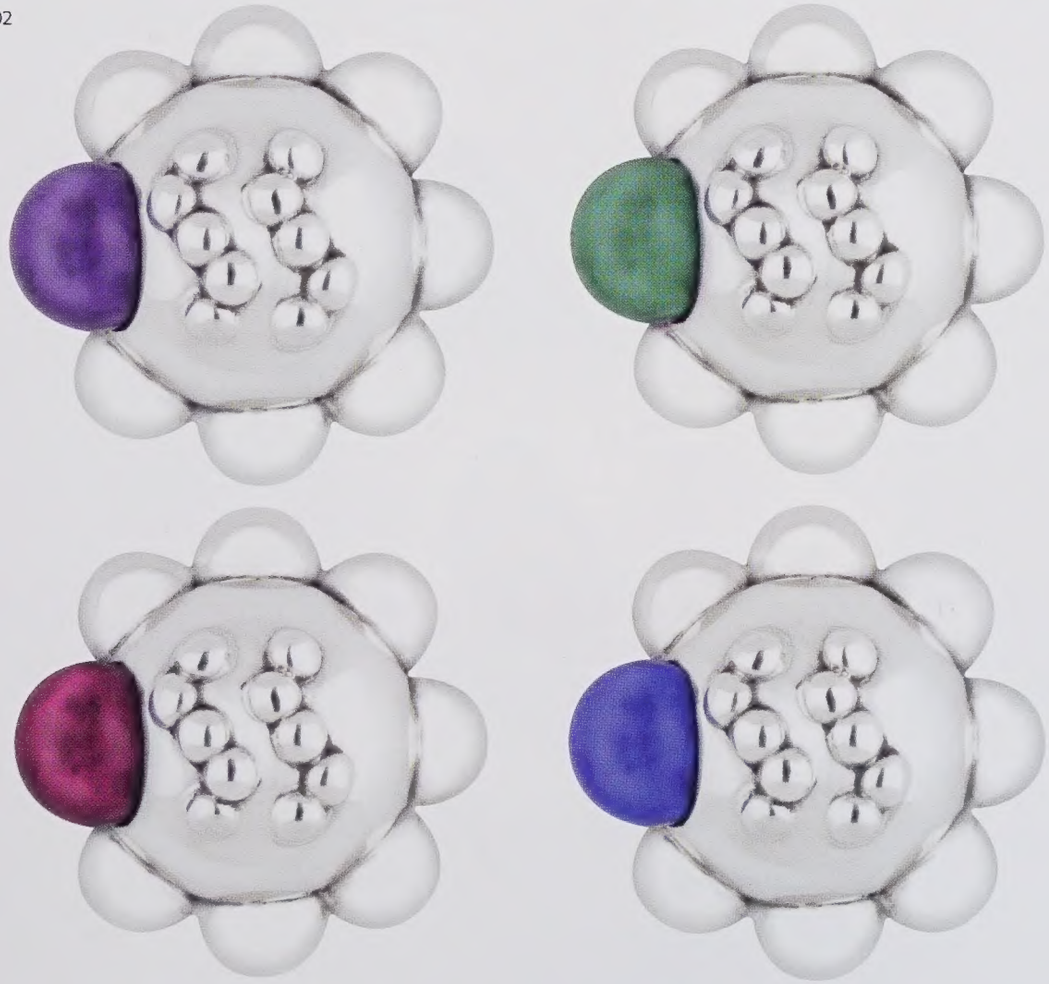
Susan Barry, an art historian, curator, and jeweler, is senior lecturer at the University of the Arts in Philadelphia.

Alveoli, 1994
oxidized silver, pearls
2 x 1 x 1"

Mitotic Cell (brooch), 1998
oxidized silver, cubic zirconia,
neodymium magnets
$2\,1/2 \times 1\,1/2 \times 1\,1/2$"



HIV Viruses (brooches), 2002
silver, lapis lazuli, jade,
carnelian, amethyst,
neodymium magnets
each $1/2 \times 3/4 \times 1/2$"



Andrew Goss and Sandra Noble Goss

by Barbara Isherwood

Studio facing southeast, with band saw, cutting gear, fume hood, and soldering area in background.
Photo: Sandra Noble Goss

Sandra Noble Goss, 2002

Sandra Noble Goss
Fossil Strata, 2001
etched sterling silver, bronze
$1\frac{3}{4} \times 1\frac{1}{4}$"

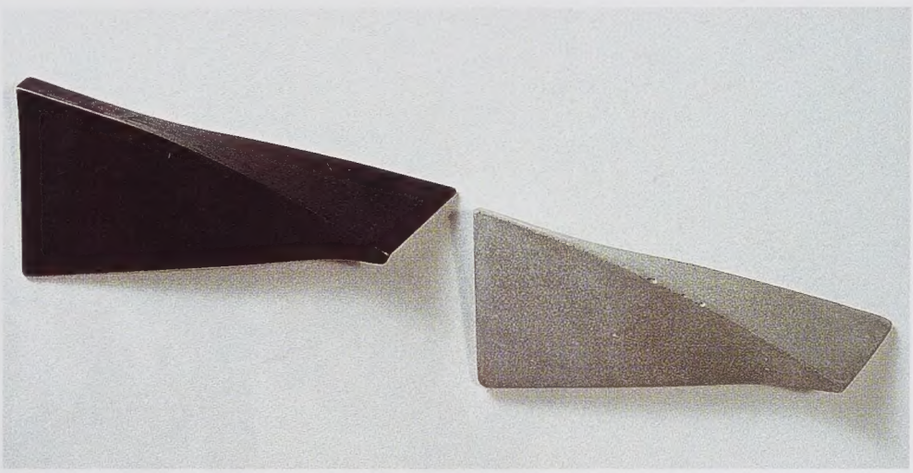
Some artists leave the big city reluctantly, chased out by high rents. For Owen Sound, Canada–based jewelers Andrew Goss and Sandra Noble Goss, living away from an urban center was a conscious choice that has driven their careers. The pair left Toronto in 1973, and haven't looked back since.

"We wanted to live in the country. We thought it would be neat to be self-employed, and that jewelry was a way we could do it," recalls Sandra, who now laughs at the casual way they chose their life's calling. Night-school courses and a year at Hornsey College in England were followed by formal training as jewelers at George Brown College in Toronto.

Upon graduation, the couple headed for the countryside. In 1976 they built a solar-heated house fifteen miles outside of Owen Sound, a town of 20,000 situated on Georgian Bay, 100 miles northwest of Toronto. When the struggle of raising two children in an isolated rural area became too formidable, they sold the house and moved into town. A renovated cottage now offers a lakeside retreat.

A gallery-like showroom is the first space you encounter upon entry into their turn-of-the-century home, featuring terra-cotta walls, custom-built display cases, and spotlights. The living area, painted in golden yellow, is filled with art by family and local artists. Ceramics figure prominently in the mix—Sandra points out that her first choice for night-school classes way back when was pottery, but the waiting list was too long! An office is tucked away on the second floor, along with family bedrooms, one of which will become a photography studio when their university-age sons leave home permanently.

The Gosses' studio occupies a renovated third-floor attic. White walls, plants, and lots of windows give the space an airy feel. In the winter Georgian Bay is visible, as is the river that runs behind their property. It's hard to



Studio facing north, with Sandra's jewelry bench.
Photo: Sandra Noble Goss

Andrew Goss
Ridge Pin Set, 1999
brass, patina, concrete
each 3 x 1"
Photo: Kris Rosar

Andrew Goss, 2002

believe that the house is right downtown. Each artist's bench is beside a window; the adjacent walls reveal their individual sources of inspiration. Andrew's philosophical bent is evident through poems and quotations from thinkers such as Lao Tzu and André Breton. In Sandra's area, images of paisley designs, seashells, and a postcard of the young Queen Elizabeth II in full regalia reveal her appreciation of intricate pattern.

The studio is fully equipped with a band saw, hydraulic press, several large work tables, an extra bench for an assistant, a soldering area with a fume hood, areas for grinding, finishing, and patinating, polishing equipment, an etching bath, and a small press for printmaking. While they share equipment and materials and a business, Goss Design Studios, each artist works independently. Both use silver combined with copper, bronze, and brass; in addition, Andrew employs concrete in both jewelry and sculpture.

"The motivation of the concrete is a reaction against preciousness," says Andrew; his works include pendants in which diamonds are submerged in concrete. Conceptually challenging as a material for jewelry, concrete also presents practical difficulties. "It makes things much more chaotic in my life," he says; the mess concrete creates doesn't mix well with the cleanliness required in metalsmithing. A second worktable was recently added, to give both artists enough room to work.

In addition to ensuring sufficient physical space, the pair have also learned to give each other creative space. One unofficial rule is that when one of the artists is exploring a particular technique or material, the other will leave it alone. "At one point we did have to figure it out," Sandra explains. "Because if you see someone else doing something new, you automatically say, 'Oh you could do this.' But it interferes with that person's development of that idea."

While their work has evolved in different directions, some friendly creative cross pollination does occur. Sandra uses etching to create jewelry, wall pieces, and books that speak of memory and the passage of time. Andrew recently borrowed her technology to etch the word "inappropriate" into concrete bricks — his comment on how the use of concrete in jewelry is often perceived.

The issue of influence comes up again when I ask how living in Owen Sound has affected their work. Sandra feels that not living in a big, fashion-oriented center may be more conducive to developing a distinctive style. "You tend to go off in your own direction," she observes. Andrew speculates that their business might have been quite different if they'd stayed in Toronto, with commission work replacing their current bread-and-butter activity: successful production lines that are sold in galleries across Canada. The income from these lines, as well as the sales of their one-of-a-kind pieces, means they need only do a few selected craft shows each year. They admit that what they've been able to achieve has been possible precisely because of their rejection of the urban lifestyle. For the Gosses, small is beautiful. ⧗

Barbara Isherwood is a Toronto-based writer and broadcaster on visual arts and craft.

Pebble Galaxy (wall piece with removable pin), 2002
bronze, sterling silver, polymer clay, glass, coral, shell, magnets
diameter 13"
Photo: Karen Mauch

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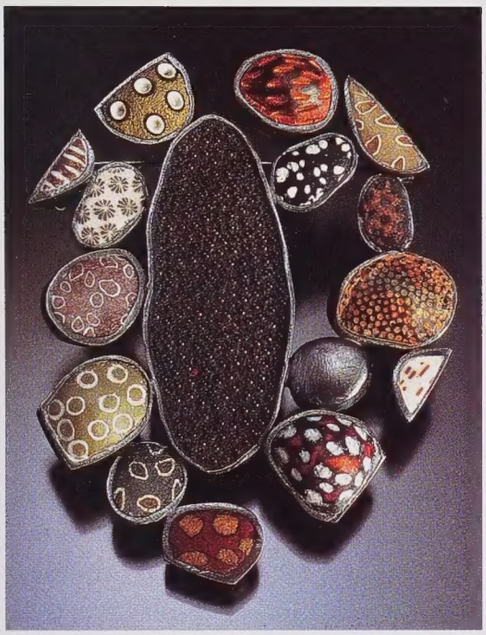
Serendipitous Structure

by Marjorie Simon



Colors gallop, parabolas swoop over and under boulders, textures invite caresses. Flowers deconstruct into Japanese textiles. Silver boundaries barely contain fractured color planes. Aggregates of tiny "rocks" jostle for space, adhering to each other like sea foam bubbles at the shoreline. They appear barely to touch, as if they might float apart with the next wave. The same shapes in different colors morph into grandmother's button collection.

Rock 59, 2002
polymer clay, sterling silver, glass
$2\,1/2 \times 2 \times 1/4$"
All Photos: Robert Diamante

A swirling abstract reminiscent of a child's "scribble drawing" is in fact a take on Madonna and Child via Picasso; look again and a halo appears. Shifting patterns of light suggest an intimate three-dimensional version of one of Michael James's flickering and moody quilts. Somewhere between jigsaw puzzles and mosaics-to-wear, they could be art for the blind, but who would want to miss all that color?

Visitors to craft shows may know Steven Ford and David Forlano by their company name, CityZenCane, the polymer clay guys, but that doesn't cover all they do. True, they emerged from the world of polymer clay with a highly developed aesthetic, and have only recently considered the conceptual side of jewelry. But their spirit, their constantly evolving designs, and their refusal to coast on a well-earned reputation warrants attention.

Ford and Forlano have been making jewelry together since 1988. As sophisticated interpreters of the new idiom of polymer clay, they moved through a vocabulary of glass (canes, *millefiore*), and fiber (*ikat* and *shibori*) techniques. About three years ago, they began to include metal in their jewelry, and have gradually developed a more "metalist," formal approach to their work. That they continue to use polymer clay is now of less interest than their collaboration and what they are exploring, but the

Big Bead Necklace, 1998
polymer clay
1 1/4 x 21"

medium is at least in part the messenger.

In the beginning, Ford and Forlano's designs stuck to the established vocabulary of polymer clay, but were a lot more interesting. The two painters employed their design philosophy to create work that was juicy, colorful, lightweight, and, not coincidentally, beautifully crafted. For the most part, surfaces were flat and pattern reigned; elements were simply cut off the cane and assembled. But the composite parts had valence all by themselves. Richly patterned, they were much like Ford's contemporary paintings.

They bring a broad range of creative sensibilities to the body, unencumbered by a narrow view of what jewelry is supposed to be.

Gradually the artists became more involved with textures, using "toothbrushes, sugars, and salts, and things we could push in and rinse out, layering opaque and translucent..., trying to give each section its character."[1] Their willingness to degrade what is usually a smooth finish puts them at odds with conventional handling of polymer clay. Like Susan Kasson Sloan, who mixes epoxy resin with pigments and other mysterious substances, Ford and Forlano now build jewelry with and without a metal frame, using the material as needed. They bring a broad range of creative sensibilities to the body, unencumbered by a narrow view of what jewelry is supposed to be.

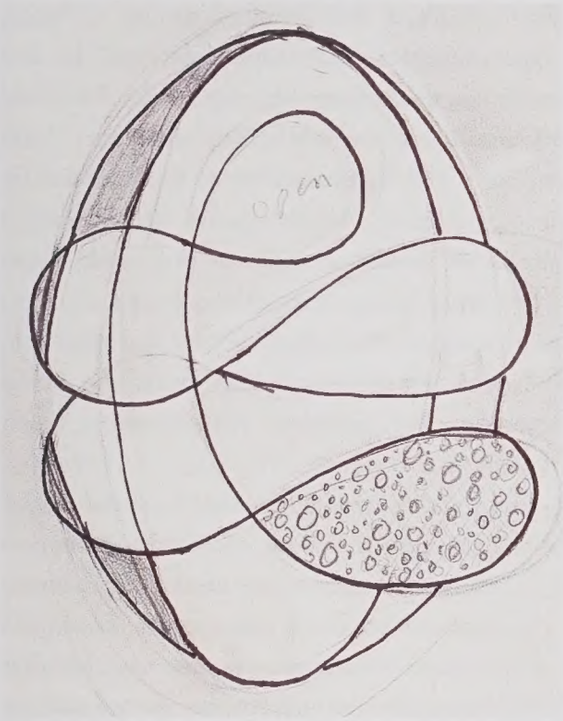
Ford and Forlano produce several lines of limited-edition jewelry, on which they practice an almost infinite rotation of forms, surfaces, patterns, and palettes. There are "Hydro-top pins," mixed-metal circles partially formed on the hydraulic press and completed with clay, Mother and Child brooches, and several varieties of flowers. A simple four-petaled blossom like an animated propeller is reproduced in seemingly endless partnerings of color and texture; a circular bloom suggests a cubist peony with nearly overlapping petals. Because polymer clay is pigmented, color and surface are integrated, and three-dimensional dots, "bacilli," circles, and random spots grow within their bezels. Flat areas of patterned color may be abraded or satin-buffed. Scumbled or degraded surfaces reflect the artists' gritty North Philadelphia surroundings, but also a need for beauty. Neighbor and metalsmith Jan Yager found tiny flowers surviving in cracked concrete and abandoned lots. Ford and Forlano defy the urban fortress with irrepressible color, as if harnessing the sunlight that bakes the courtyard behind their warehouse studio.

Ford and Forlano were trained as painters, and in some ways they still are. The large "flowers" and "Mother and Child" series are proof that cubism still has currency. Using the silver frame as line, much as cloisonné wire defines color fields in enameling, Ford and Forlano create what critic John Berger has called the metaphorical model of cubism, that is, "the diagram: . . . a visible, symbolic representation of invisible processes, forces, structures."[2] Through the fractured surface and seemingly transparent planes, the "figure or landscape becomes the construction."[3] Here, frame really does equal structure. Because they can actually remove material to create negative space instead of merely suggesting it as one might do in a painting or enamel, "the space between objects is part of the same structure as the objects themselves."[4] And by combining the properties of metal and

Rock 62, 2002
polymer clay, sterling silver, 24k gold,
seed beads, glass grinding beads
3 x 2 1/2 x 1/4"

Mother and Child 3, 2001
graphite, ink on paper
$6\frac{3}{4} \times 7\frac{1}{4}$"

Mother and Child 3, 2001
polymer clay, sterling silver, glass
$3\frac{7}{8} \times 3\frac{1}{8} \times \frac{1}{2}$"



clay, color becomes both the form and the surface.

What we call polymer clay originated in Germany in the 1930s, where it was used primarily by dollmakers for its pliability and translucency. Marketed as Fimo by Eberhard Faber (of eraser fame), it was subsequently manufactured in the United States as Sculpey. In polymer clay, fine particles of polyvinyl chloride are suspended in a plasticiser and colored with pigments. It is not clay, yet in many ways it behaves like clay, in that it can be rolled, molded, formed, kneaded, and best of all, fired at a low temperature (212-300°F, depending on the manufacturer), making it ideal for the home crafter. It retains its vivid color after firing, allows the transfer of appropriated images and text, and has a low "degree of difficulty."

Although a few pioneers employed polymer clay as a fine-art medium in Europe, most of the credit for its popularity in the United States must go to Pier Voulkos for her bold and witty use of this new material. When Voulkos began in the 1970s, she quickly established a presence with her large and colorful jewelry, using the garish colors to great advantage. Polymer clay eventually became a craft chameleon, used to create the look of turquoise, ivory, and other "natural" materials. Use spread rapidly, as traditional glass caning and mosaic techniques were easily learned. Despite its enormous distribution as a craft material, by and large its design techniques have not evolved, and it remains mainly a medium for hobbyists. Almost

Flower 3, 2001
polymer clay, sterling silver, mixed media
$4\,3/4 \times 4\,1/2$"

Rocks 13, 2001
polymer clay, sterling silver, mixed media
3 3/4 x 3 x 1/4"

anyone can do it, and sometimes it seems as if everyone does.

Ford and Forlano appear to have achieved a perfect balance of friendship and business, synergy and solitude. Their personal lives are separate, but in the studio, they are partners, appreciative of each other's gifts. Steven Ford grew up in Indiana and attended Washington University in St. Louis, where he was nearly a glass major, but settled on painting. In Rome, on a junior year abroad with Tyler School of Art, Ford met David Forlano, a Tyler student from Pennsylvania, and subsequently transferred to Tyler for his senior year. Working in neighboring studios, the two discovered they were having nearly opposite problems in their figure drawings, and an instructor suggested that they just correct each other's work. Showing a level of trust that prefigured their current relationship, they did; that charcoal drawing was their first collaboration. Forlano recalls his shock at seeing Ford's work. A self-described painter of "large, expressionistic color shape paintings," he had never seen anything like the sticks Ford had mounted on the wall. He had never "met anybody with that sensibility of thinking that far into a painting to the point of the object itself....It fascinated me that you could think beyond just making the image ... [to] deconstruct the object, even the approach, even the reason for painting." To this day Ford's drawings for jewelry remain very much deconstructed objects.

Ford and Forlano appear to have achieved a perfect balance of friendship and business, synergy and solitude.

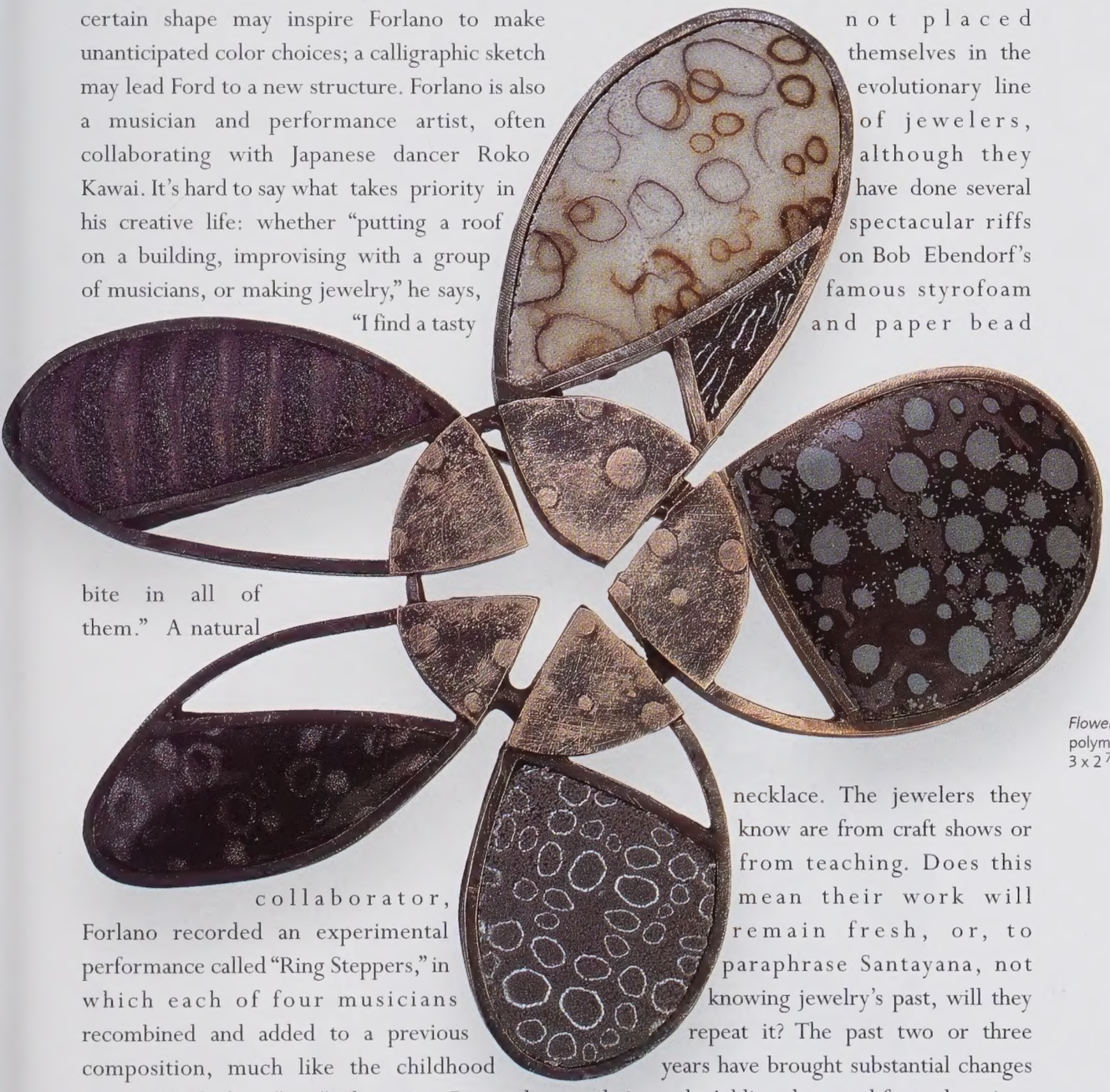
The artists were introduced to polymer clay in 1997 by the work of Martha Breen, an early practitioner whose mother had been an artistic mentor of the young Ford. He recognized the cane technique from his glass training, and he and Forlano started making simple checkerboards and canes. In fairy-tale fashion, they put their work into a cardboard box, took it to the Chrysler Museum in Norfolk, Virginia, and sold every last piece. Then they traveled to Washington, D.C., and sold some other pieces to the Phillips Collection and the Smithsonian Institution, without knowing anything about fashion, jewelry, or, for that matter, the world of fine craft. To educate themselves on emerging color trends, they bought *Vogue* magazine.

While their work has changed dramatically since then, their working method has not. Ford, the one with the curly hair, draws the original design and provides the structure, although he does not actually fabricate the metal frames. Forlano, with shaved head, is the surface guy. He fills in with the polymer clay, provides the color, and plays with texture. This suits them both. Ford makes a number of drawings on a theme, but he doesn't actually know which ones Forlano will select, and by extension, which ones will be realized. Forlano, for his part, loves the challenge of interpreting the form he's been given. He likes being given a structure to respond to; Ford likes controlling the opening design. Ford does most of the beaded work, Forlano does more of the pins. Their metal fabricator, Maryanne Petrus, tells them what can and cannot be done in metal, leaving them free to concentrate on design. Ford likes "to separate things out, so that each element has its own nature" within a single idea. The

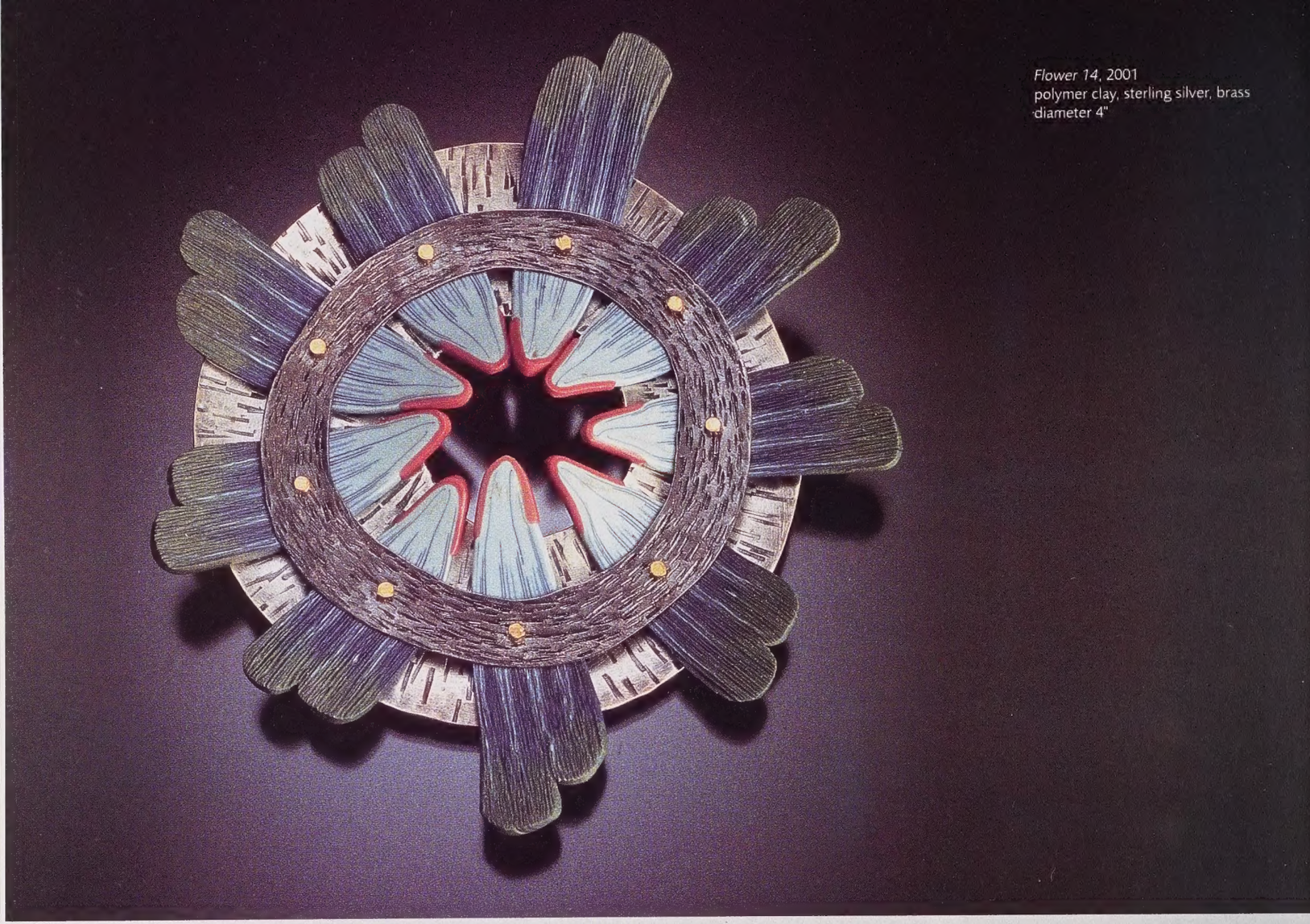
colorful "Mother and Child" pins are more typical of Forlano. What Forlano calls a blank slate, Ford sees as a predetermined structure. They are true collaborators—work actually passes back and forth between them.

Ford and Forlano have established an extraordinary level of trust. "We've had every argument there is to have so many times....[we] can have any kind of fight and survive it," says Ford. And though they generally know what to expect from each other, they love to be surprised, and, like many long-term relationships, continue to surprise each other. A certain shape may inspire Forlano to make unanticipated color choices; a calligraphic sketch may lead Ford to a new structure. Forlano is also a musician and performance artist, often collaborating with Japanese dancer Roko Kawai. It's hard to say what takes priority in his creative life: whether "putting a roof on a building, improvising with a group of musicians, or making jewelry," he says, "I find a tasty bite in all of them." A natural collaborator, Forlano recorded an experimental performance called "Ring Steppers," in which each of four musicians recombined and added to a previous composition, much like the childhood game of "Telephone" or "Whispering Down the Lane." For his part, Ford has found a way to bring his paintings to the body. There is a direct correspondence between his oversized canvases of the 1990s and the pair's recent brooches. Now that he has passed beyond fascination with material tricks and teaching technique, Ford is no longer actively involved in the polymer clay community; lately he has been experimenting with flocking.

The pair have few predecessors, and their influences and heroes are largely from the worlds of music (Brian Eno, David Bowie, Björk) painting (Terry Winters), and sculpture (Martin Puryear). They certainly don't follow any known "school," except in that very American sensibility of accepting everything, high and low, as long as it's good design. As they came into the jewelry world somewhat accidentally, they have not placed themselves in the evolutionary line of jewelers, although they have done several spectacular riffs on Bob Ebendorf's famous styrofoam and paper bead necklace. The jewelers they know are from craft shows or from teaching. Does this mean their work will remain fresh, or, to paraphrase Santayana, not knowing jewelry's past, will they repeat it? The past two or three years have brought substantial changes to their work. Adding the metal frame has given those designs *gravitas* and credibility. Struggling with typical jewelers' concerns such as finding pin backs that are beautiful and functional, clasps that don't prick the back of the neck or pull your hair, or the nexus of size and weight, has meant

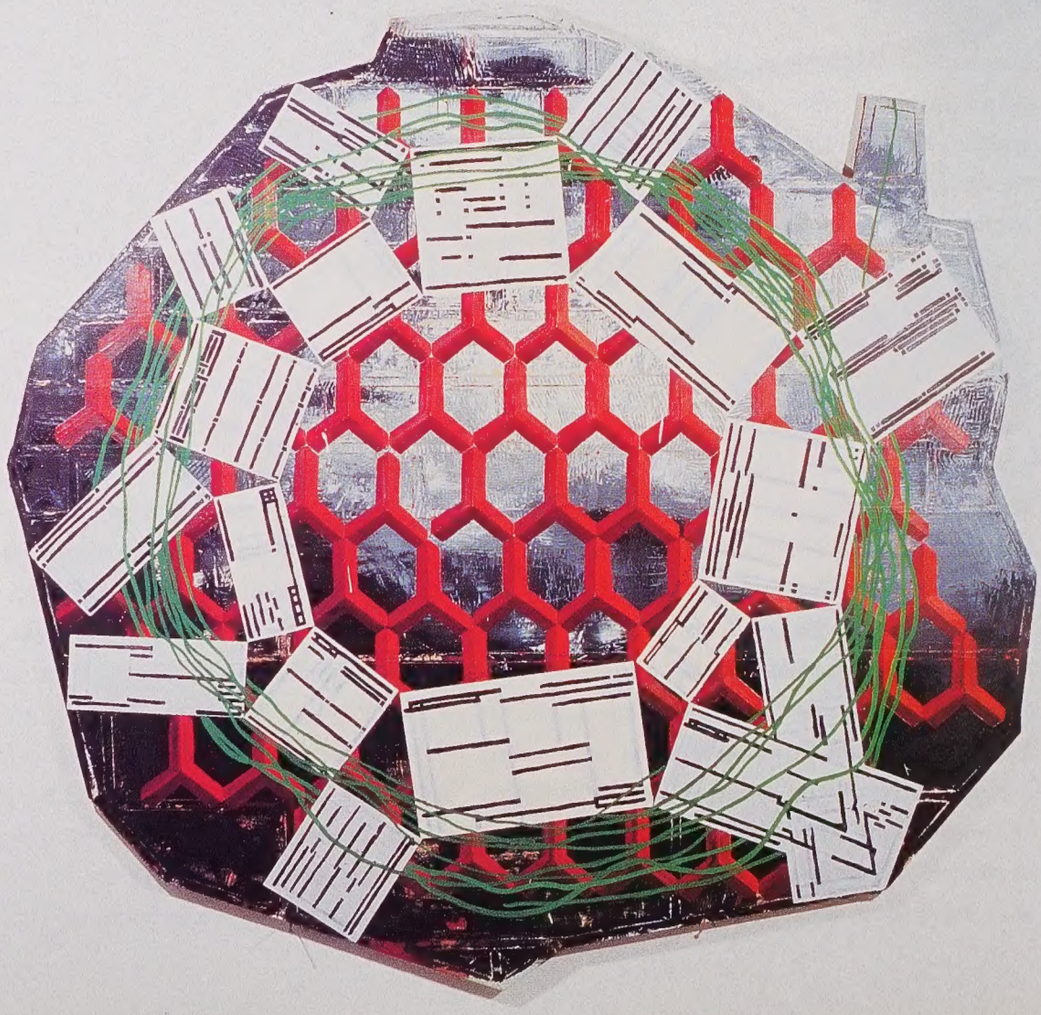


Flower 20, 2002
polymer clay, sterling silver
3 x 2 7/8 x 1/8"



Flower 14, 2001
polymer clay, sterling silver, brass
diameter 4"

Steven Ford
Untitled, 1991
oil on canvas
78 x 74"

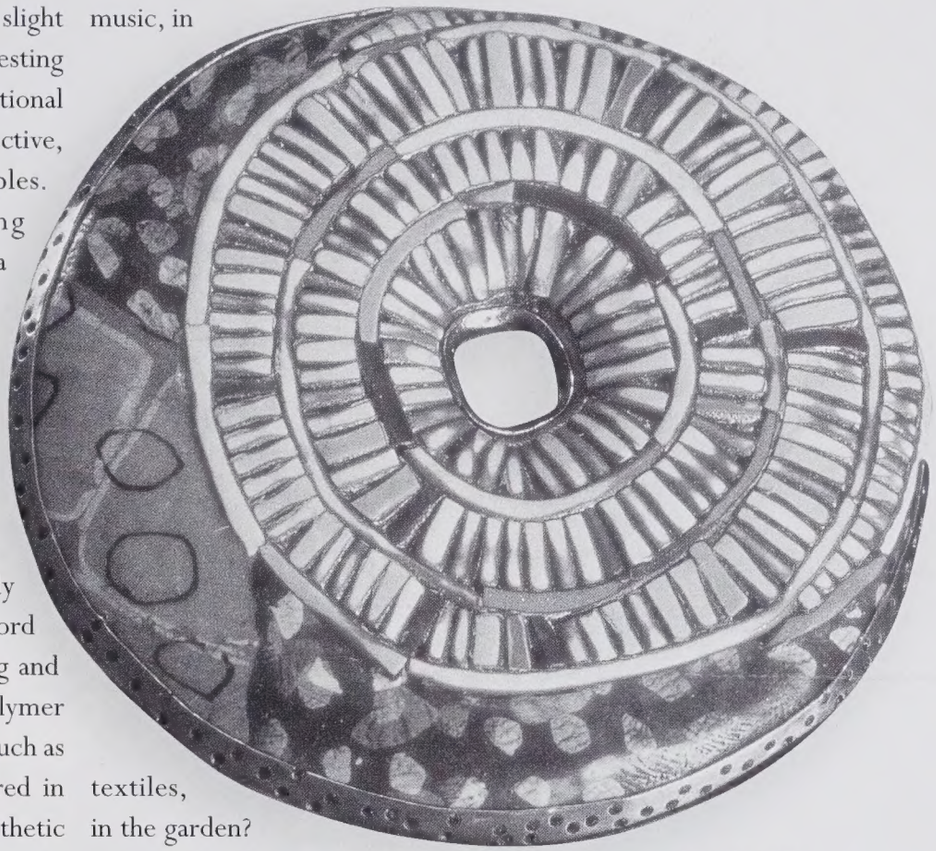


they have had to think about what they're doing in a new way.

The artists make a point of referring to each piece as "one-of-a-kind," even in a collection that would be considered "limited edition," i.e., similar ideas repeatedly expressed with slight variation in color and texture. It's an interesting difference in nomenclature from a traditional jeweler's approach. From a painting perspective, each one is unique; prints are multiples. Conversely, in polymer clay, caning techniques make it too easy to replicate a single idea. Particularly for Forlano, every live performance is unique, especially with improvisation. But in craft, the multiple has legitimacy, even honor; making more than one means having the skills to reproduce it.

Ford and Forlano have clearly left the world of polymer clay behind, and not only because of their increased use of metal. Ford paid his professional dues through teaching and serving as president of the National Polymer Clay Guild. But in a world where projects such as "Bug Buddies" and "Silly Snakes" are offered in books, there is little room for the aesthetic choices they have made. They have used polymer clay for its best qualities—almost limitless texture, form, and color—to create wearable and exciting jewelry. Unconcerned with hiding or disguising the fact that they use polymer clay, they want their audience to respond to the design and not the material, so that after a moment the buyer returns to say, "By the way, what is that?" Like resin artist Peter Chang, whom they admire for his continued ability to confound and delight, they too have transcended their medium.

The pair's award-winning appearances at the elite craft shows introduce some intriguing questions for which there may not be ready answers. They have yet to embrace the world of jewelry in all its history and traditions, and this may ultimately make them the more interesting jewelers. Whereas craft students learn the history of painting, painters don't study craft. On one level, work is ultimately judged on design. Maybe we need new categories. What are reasonable expectations for inclusion into the field? Will Ford and Forlano begin to approach the body the way a jeweler does, to consider philosophically whether something goes on skin or clothing, neck or breast? Does participation imply some kind of reference to the history of jewelry? Or is it sufficient to be open to influences wherever they present themselves, in music, in textiles, in the garden?



Circle Pin, 2000
polymer clay, sterling silver
diameter 3"

Despite at least one disgruntled former fan, who laments that they have taken a darker and more serious turn, Ford and Forlano have been highly successful in the marketplace. But the marketplace is not where they will experience a creative challenge. As long as they continue to make jewelry with the same level of care and probing intelligence, who cares what medium they use? The idea that value does not come from the material is not new in jewelry or in painting. If we want Ford and Forlano to continue to enrich the field, let us embrace and educate them, nurture and engage them. And they will do the same for us. ⧗

Marjorie Simon is a metalsmith and writer based in New Jersey.

[1] This and all other unattributed quotes taken from conversation and written communication with the artists, July 2002.
[2] John Berger, "The Moment of Cubism," in *Selected Essays* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2001), p. 84.
[3] Ibid., p. 85.
[4] Ibid., p. 86.

Nyamakala 9: Gash, 2001
bloom iron
18 x 7 1/2"
Photo: Ellen Martin

Lee Sauder

Crossing the Creative Matrix

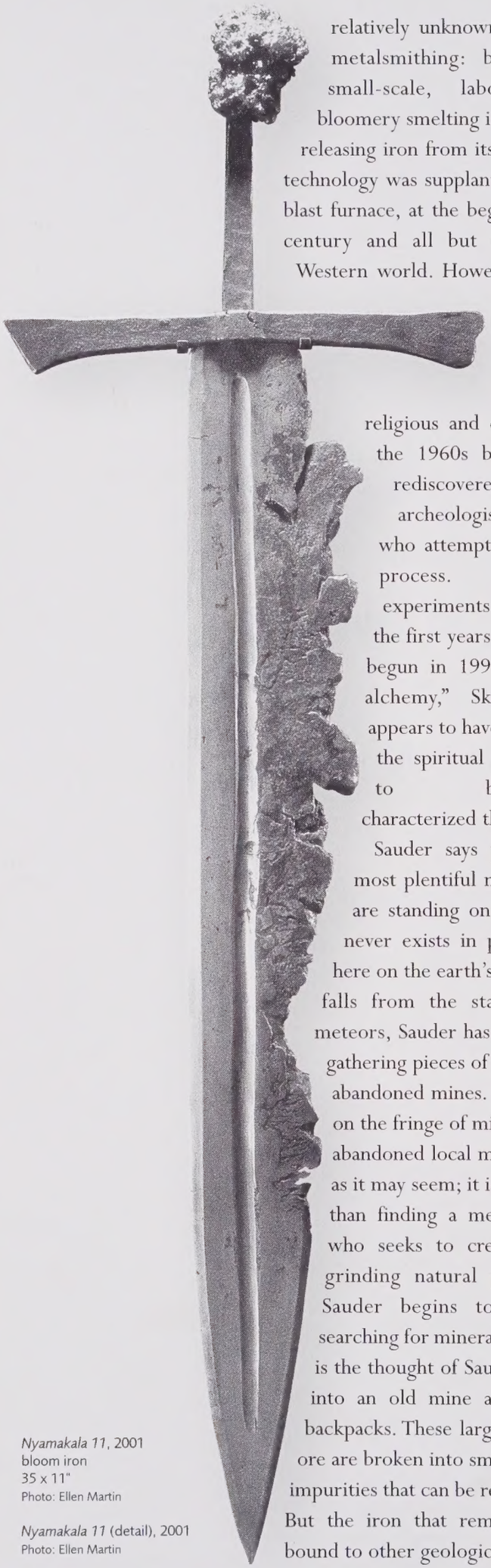
by Anna Fariello

There are few disciplines that depend primarily upon visual observation for an understanding of human creativity and meaning behind objects. An art historian examines a composition to determine a work's authenticity and attribution; an appraiser closely examines a piece of jewelry to confirm its value; an archeologist learns to *read* an object as evidence of the physical process which produced it. But as viewers of art, we tend to suppress reading an object in favor of an appreciation of its aesthetic value.

However much, or little, time we might spend examining a work of art, we seldom consider the process that brought it into being. Process is more than the difficult labor that gives birth to artistic offspring. For the maker, it can become a critical factor in the aesthetic decision-making that shapes the final piece. For the viewer, understanding the artist's process and motivation is often integral to understanding the meaning of the work.

Process plays an important creative role in the recent iron sculptures made by Lee Sauder, an artist living and working in Lexington, Virginia. Evocative, lyrical, and sensual, his work reveals much about the physical relationship between the artist and his material. Sauder's iron sculptures and "pyro-prints" impart the sense of discovery and passion that informs his work. Indeed, the object represents a subtle reenactment of maker with material.

As a *document*, the finished object can be considered a physical record of the process that produced it; it may also reveal the artist's inspiration, creativity, and technological experimentation. For the past five years the experimental process that has defined Sauder's creative activity is one that is



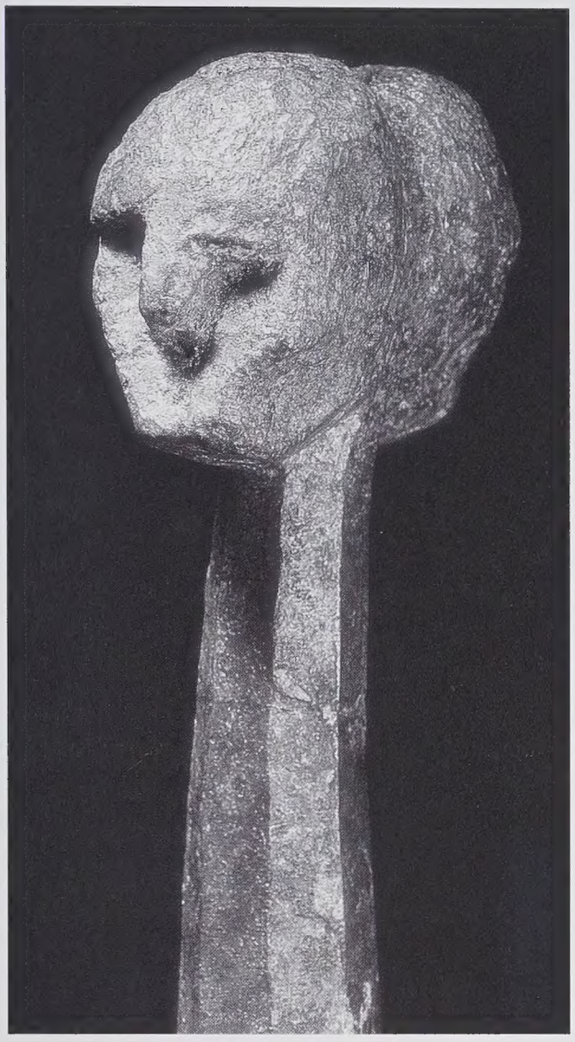
Nyamakala 11, 2001
bloom iron
35 x 11"
Photo: Ellen Martin

Nyamakala 11 (detail), 2001
Photo: Ellen Martin

relatively unknown even in the world of metalsmithing: bloomery smelting. A small-scale, labor-intensive process, bloomery smelting is the original method of releasing iron from its ore. This centuries-old technology was supplanted by its successor, the blast furnace, at the beginning of the sixteenth century and all but disappeared from the Western world. However, bloomery smelting survived in Africa into the early twentieth century, where the process carried a religious and cultural significance. In the 1960s bloomery smelting was rediscovered and investigated by archeologists and anthropologists who attempted to replicate the lost process. Accounts of these experiments steered Sauder during the first years of his own exploration, begun in 1998 with his "partner in alchemy," Skip Williams. Sauder appears to have been guided as well by the spiritual and ritualized approach to bloomery smelting that characterized the process in Africa.

Sauder says poetically, "Iron is the most plentiful metal on this planet; we are standing on a big iron ball. Yet it never exists in pure metallic form out here on the earth's surface, except when it falls from the stars." Short of chasing meteors, Sauder has contented himself with gathering pieces of discarded iron ore from abandoned mines. Given that Lexington is on the fringe of mining country, finding an abandoned local mine is not as far-fetched as it may seem; it is certainly more reliable than finding a meteorite. Like a painter who seeks to create original colors by grinding natural pigments from stone, Sauder begins to make sculpture by searching for minerals in the raw. Less poetic is the thought of Sauder and Williams hiking into an old mine and hauling out ore in backpacks. These large pieces of "found" iron ore are broken into smaller bits, and any initial impurities that can be removed are tossed aside. But the iron that remains is still chemically bound to other geological materials; indeed, the bloomery process is a method of extracting pure iron from a heterogeneous mineral mixture. Sauder has written an educational "how-to" paper, humorously titled "Iron from Scratch," detailing the six-hour process of making a "bloom," which he hands out at his demonstrations and workshops.

Why would an artist in the twenty-first century want to spend so much time at a precursory stage of production, when raw materials can be readily purchased? Steel rods come in practically any shape, length, or width and are available throughout the country. Sauder explains his rationale: "All modern ironwork shares starting points provided by industry: preformed round bars, square bars, flat bars, and plates of homogeneous steel. In contrast, the amorphous sponge of iron created by the bloomery process has as much character as finely figured wood or stone. Each bloom from my furnace is unique in its size, shape, density, chemical composition, and forging properties. In rediscovering and using the bloomery process, I've come to know iron, not in its guise as a preformed industrial material, but to see its



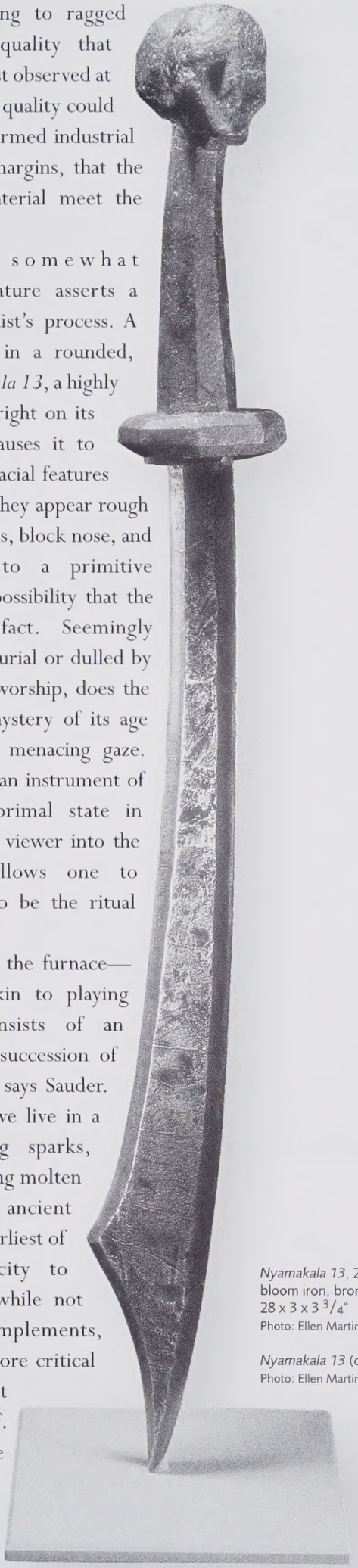
true face as a *natural* material."

The idea that there is a *natural* state of metal, a primal starting point, appeals to Sauder. Here his work follows the dictum of John Ruskin, who formulated the basis for the English Arts and Crafts movement in the mid-nineteenth century, proposing that artists ensure a "truth to material."[1] Sauder also makes "iron from scratch" because he feels a personal responsibility, as an artist and as a craftsman, to absorb as much metallurgical information as possible and to know all there is to know about his material. The organic and somewhat idiosyncratic quality of raw iron in its natural state contributes greatly to the aesthetics of Sauder's sculpture. For the "Nyamakala" series, Sauder drew on the West African word and its power to guide and manipulate this willful material. *Nyamakala*, loosely translated, means "soul handle," and refers to people who have the skill to shape the life force, most notably blacksmiths, musicians, and hunters.

The "Nyamakala" series features graceful, fan-shaped, upright pieces gingerly balanced on tapered stems. Thick at the center, the metal is hammered outward, thinning to ragged edges. The raw, organic quality that characterizes "pure" iron is best observed at the work's outer edge; such a quality could not have emerged from preformed industrial material. It is here, at the margins, that the interface of Nature and material meet the artist's own hand.

Even in Sauder's somewhat representational pieces, Nature asserts a certain control over the artist's process. A primal presence is evident in a rounded, hammered head atop *Nyamakala 13*, a highly textured sword displayed upright on its tip; its hollow-eyed stare causes it to appear like a skull. Its other facial features are rugged, almost abstract. They appear rough hewn, a first draft. Lidless eyes, block nose, and angular chin contribute to a primitive appearance, alluding to the possibility that the head is an ancient artifact. Seemingly mummified by centuries of burial or dulled by primitive practices of fetish worship, does the sword possess magic? The mystery of its age gives the head a somewhat menacing gaze. Should it be feared or is this an instrument of protection? This implied primal state in Sauder's work transports the viewer into the alchemist's realm, and allows one to participate in what seems to be the ritual initiation of a secret society.

"The feeding and firing of the furnace—like all my artwork—is akin to playing improvised music; it consists of an exhausting and exhilarating succession of rapid decision and reaction," says Sauder. "For all this long, hot day, we live in a magical world of flashing sparks, pirouetting flames, and flowing molten rock." Sauder joins an ancient fraternity of craftsmen, the earliest of whom developed a capacity to transmute base elements—while not into gold—into useful implements, which in many cases were more critical to the survival of their nascent cultures than gold itself. Transmutation—the transformation of material via process—has long been celebrated in myth and song



Nyamakala 13, 2002
bloom iron, bronze
28 x 3 x 3 3/4"
Photo: Ellen Martin

Nyamakala 13 (detail), 2002
Photo: Ellen Martin

Untitled (pyroprint), 2001
seared paper
30 x 22"
Photo: Ellen Martin

for its capacity to harness natural elements for human use. It was the artisan who had the ability to control the mysterious transformation, interacting with the stuff of life to perform the earliest alchemical experiments.

The found metal mix recovered by Sauder and his modern-day alchemists is heated in a furnace of the artist's design, to separate the iron to form what is referred to as a "bloom." Over a long day of up to twelve hours, Sauder and Williams finally release the bloom from the found ore. To the untrained eye, the bloom doesn't look much different than the rock that went into the furnace twelve hours earlier; nevertheless, Sauder and Williams examine every crevice and surface for impurities and texture. Each variant present in the bloom provides an aesthetic starting point for a new work.

After cooling, Sauder begins "the adventure of coaxing a sculpture from the bloom." The amorphous shape is heated in a forge; when it approaches white heat, it is pounded into a rough shape. After long hours of preparatory work, Sauder begins to shape the iron at a level that would be considered the starting point for other smiths. Working organically and retaining what he can of the "magical world" of the smelting process, Sauder is guided by restraint. He does not attempt to impose his will over the work; instead, he explains that he wants the "true face" of the bloom to show through. The results of Sauder's experimental process are recorded in the object; it is tangible proof of success or failure on the part of the maker. Bringing all of the tools of the blacksmith's trade to bear on the metal, the final sculpture is "hammered to its home."

The evidence—or lack thereof—of the artist's hand is clear in looking at a number of Sauder's finished pieces. Fanned outward, each sculpture exposes the character of the individual bloom, and it is here, looking at the finished works, where "bloom" appears to be a descriptive term. Like angels

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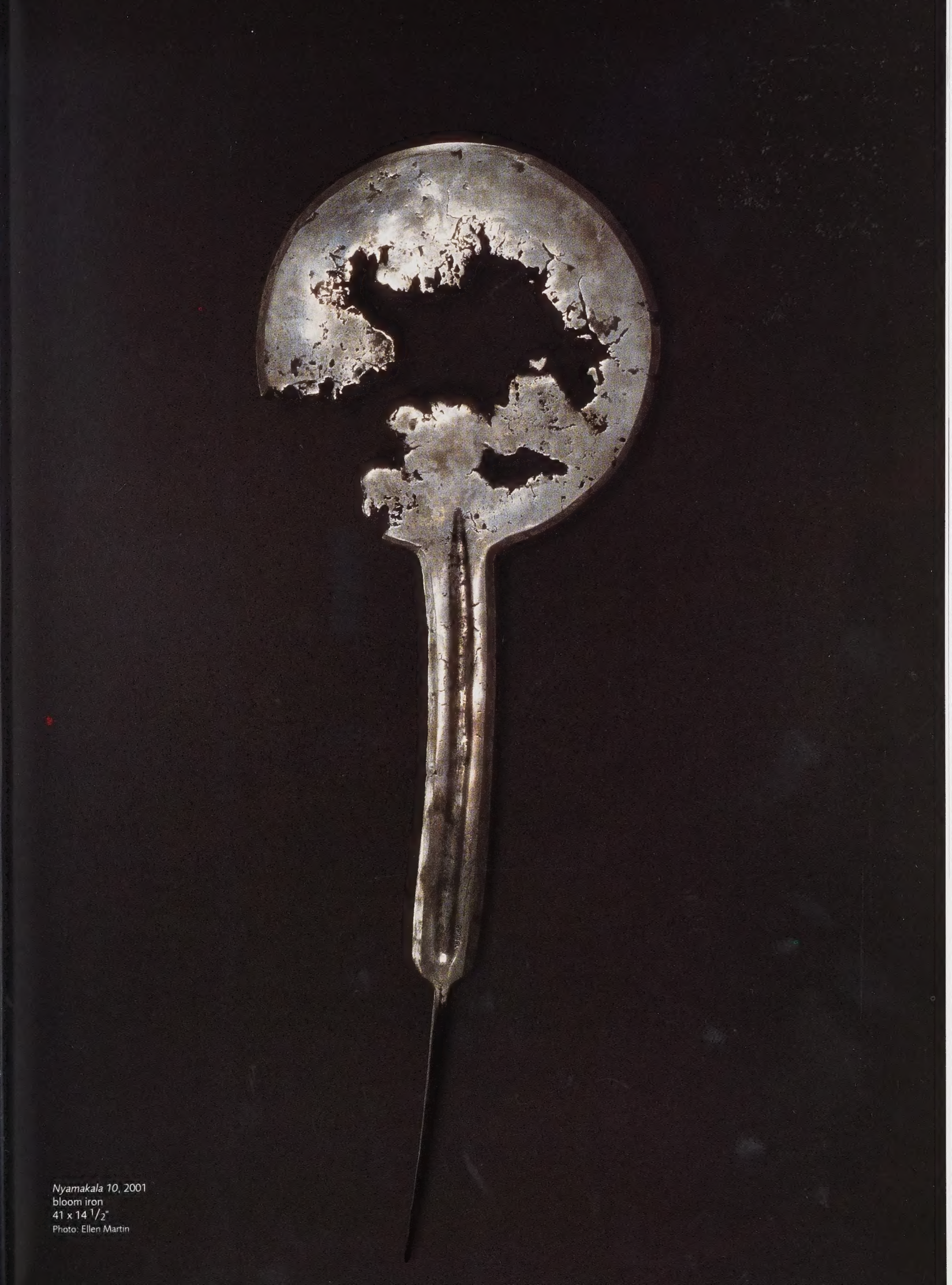


Nyamakala 10, 2001
bloom iron
41 x 14 1/2"
Photo: Ellen Martin

Nyamakala 12: Alberto's Woodlot, 2002
bloom iron
26 x 12 x 9"
Photo: Ellen Martin

with outstretched wings, many of Sauder's sculptures look as if they have bloomed outward from a stem of iron. *Nyamakala 2* is at once human-like and totem-like. As a crowned Cleopatra, she is regal and forthright; as a totem it recalls an ancient *labrys*, the double-headed ax found in prehistoric matriarchal communities. The three-part "crown" impressed at the apex of the piece reveals Sauder's subtle and refined handling of the material. Likewise, at its nether end, an almost imperceptible curve imparts a certain grace, the way the S-curve of a *contraposto* pose added a vitality to Renaissance sculpture.

Sauder's pyro-prints are an extension of the metal artist's high-touch approach. Fresh from the flame and weight of the hammer, still-warm metal is laid flat over a sheet of paper. The hot metal immediately sears the paper, burning an indelible print. These sepia-toned shapes play to the eye and the intellect. In one untitled pyro-print the fan shape first appears as a formless shadow; yet in an instant the mind recalls the three-dimensional sculpture from which it was made. In a deeper recess of memory, the mind fills out the form like an image-generating CAD program. The close touch of metal upon paper feels intimate, especially if one considers heat as an artistic sexual metaphor. Sauder's pyro-prints are clear examples of the object as document, for every mark left by the artist is a record of a decision made and an action taken by the hands that formed it.

The sculpture *Nyamakala 9: Gash* makes clear that the artist's intent is to collaborate with nature rather than control it. The parameter of the vessel form is traditional: a flared shoulder tapering to a tall graceful neck gives *Nyamakala 9: Gash* the appearance of an urn. But the body of the vessel wears the mark of the bloom, opening like an earthen fissure and revealing a paradox of emptiness: a container that cannot contain. As such, Sauder's work is full of contradictions emblematic of contemporary life.

Physicist Cyril Smith, in his essay "Metallurgical Footnotes to the History of Art," wrote that, historically, technological modification of materials appeared "first in decorative objects, rather than in tools or weapons necessary for survival."[2] His conclusion goes against the grain of contemporary thinking, which would ascribe "technology" to the province of the science laboratory rather than the artist's studio. In support of Smith's hypothesis, Sauder has gone to a great deal of effort to discover—or rather recover—a traditional technology all but lost to the twentieth century. First experimenting and then documenting their findings, Sauder and Williams have submitted the results of their research to journals such as *Historical Metallurgy* and *Materials Research Society*. Their contributions to the field embrace the multiple dimensions of object-making.

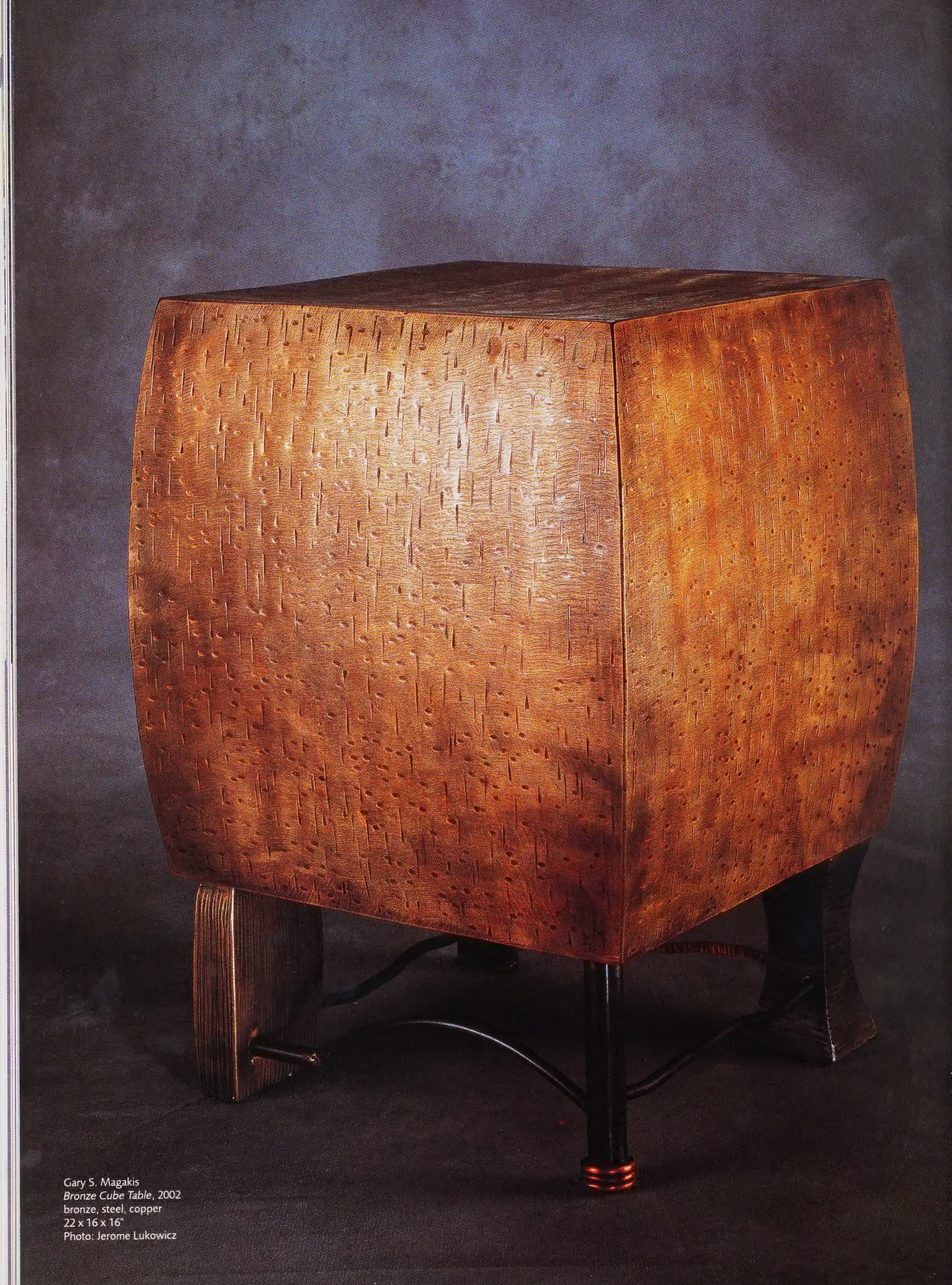
Sauder's *oeuvre* embraces more than sculpture; indeed, the artist simultaneously creates three generations of objects. Sauder first makes the bloom, seeking qualities of shape, surface, and texture that will be refined by skill. His sculptures are the second generation of the aesthetic experience, made by using techniques and tools appropriate to contemporary metalsmithing. Going a step further than most artists, Sauder is then able to create a third generation of the same piece, by transforming its three-dimensional quality into a two-dimensional "print." Thus invested in the work, Lee Sauder makes the most of the aesthetic experience. While that may mean that he has put an inordinate amount of time into his art, the results speak for themselves in the quality and refinement of the finished pieces. ⧗

Sauder's *oeuvre* embraces more than sculpture; indeed, the artist simultaneously creates three generations of objects.

Anna Fariello, a curator and writer, is director of Curatorial InSight, based in Christiansburg, Virginia.

[1] The American Studio Craft movement interpreted John Ruskin's writings as proposing "truth to materials," "exposed construction," and the inherent value of "honest" handwork. Ruskin outlined these, and other hallmarks of craftsmanship, in his early treatise *Seven Lamps of Architecture* in 1849 (New York: Merrill & Baker), p. 39.

[2] Cyril Stanley Smith, "Metallurgical Footnotes to the History of Art," in *Search for Structure* (Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1981).



Gary S. Magakis
Bronze Cube Table, 2002
bronze, steel, copper
22 x 16 x 16"
Photo: Jerome Lukowicz

Practical Matter

Contemporary Metal Furniture

by D Wood

In cast iron we recognize only the machine-made copy of a copy; in wrought-iron we feel the presence of the thought which the craftsman has stamped upon his work. One brings us face to face with matter, the other with mind.[1]

—W.C. Aitken, 1866

Art historian W.C. Aitken's edification of wrought iron was based on the precepts of Art Nouveau, a movement hostile to industry, with no place for manufacture within its strict tenets. Purveyors of cast iron countered that there was greater scope for individual craftsmanship at the design stage, fashioning molds and models in wood and clay. The debate was about process more than product, and centered on the broad definition of *wrought*, namely something "formed, fashioned, elaborated with care."[2] Evidence of the hand as much as the brain was what Aitken and his colleagues lauded. In fact, it could be said that the entire history of metal furniture has been about mind over matter, the mastery of the materials' traits, capacities and beauty.

Georg Himmelheber's 1996 *Cast-Iron Furniture and All Other Forms of Iron Furniture* provides excellent background to a discussion of contemporary metal furniture. His exhaustive gallery of European and American works begins with a piece of iron furniture cited as an ancient Roman *sella curulis*, a folding chair for persons of high rank. That it was made of iron is an indication of the value the Romans placed on the material. Further evidence of metal's esteem in ancient times is that Hephaestus, the only craft-making Greek god, was a smith. Whether Zeus and Hera were accommodated on Mount Olympus on metal folding chairs is not known, but these portable seats were produced throughout Europe until the end of the eighteenth century for religious and secular use.

Paul Freundt
Loveseat, 2002
aluminum
29 x 50 x 30"

John Rais
Basket Table, 2000
steel, patina
30 x 30 x 24"

In the Middle Ages, chests of wood completely encased in wrought-iron panels were made for the protection of goods and documents against assault and fire; these were the precursors of modern safes. One such piece was the Domesday Chest, made at the beginning of the fifteenth century to house the 1086 Land Registry of England. Another significant metal furniture form was the bed, favored by kings and dignitaries. Iron deterred the ubiquitous bugs and moths that inhabited the damp and tapestry-strewn bedrooms, not only of the rich and famous. The more sanitary nature of metal, with its capacity for being washed and disinfected, determined its choice for hospital beds, and does to the present day.

The first artist responsible for a piece of furniture constructed solely of cast iron may have been Karl Friedrich Schinkel of Berlin. A round three-legged table, dated 1820, with "lion's paws [that] look like boots that have been pulled on, and . . . acanthus leaves like baggy trouser legs"[3] preceded the garden benches for which he became renowned. The "Schinkel bench" was copied in America, and inspired other designs as well, including one commissioned by Washington Irving in 1836, which had a seat of honeycomb pattern. In the 1830s, the increase in iron production for railways prompted wider use of iron for furniture and ornament, primarily for gardens. Unfortunately, few examples of the delicate yet strong neo-Gothic tracery from this period remain. At mid-century, nature became the predominant design motif, as branches and tendrils were thought to enhance the sitters' enjoyment of gardens or park.

In England, the iron industry was centered in and around Birmingham, where the Coalbrookedale Company copyrighted its designs for furniture. An 1847 Coalbrookedale ornamental chair was the "first step towards domesticating iron furniture,"[4] and, again, was readily copied by American firms. Significant advances in production occurred in the early nineteenth century that would secure the future of metal furniture. A bent-rod rocking chair first appeared in England in 1839; a U.S. patent for this form was granted in 1867. As early as 1829, a French company was manufacturing iron tubes, and in 1842, August Kitschelt opened his own factory in Vienna to make beds, tables, sofas and armchairs from iron tubes, in combination with upholstery. Another innovation was the use of thin wire: the ice cream parlor chair, from the late 1890s, was marketed in the thousands by the Royal Metal Manufacturing Company of Chicago. These designs were the precursors of tubular steel furniture in the twentieth century.

A popular cast-iron piece of the early twentieth century was the school desk, most manufactured by the American School Furniture Company of Buffalo, New York. Church pews also incorporated cast-iron supports. Despite its appropriateness for certain applications, cast iron reached its peak of development before the onset of Art Nouveau; that movement's disdain for mass manufacture contributed to its decline as a furniture component. The only significant works of cast iron in the Art Nouveau period were Hector Guimard's Métro stations in Paris. It was not until the twentieth century that the use of metal was revived in the hands of designers Mart Stam, Marcel Breuer, and

Ludwig Mies van der Rohe.

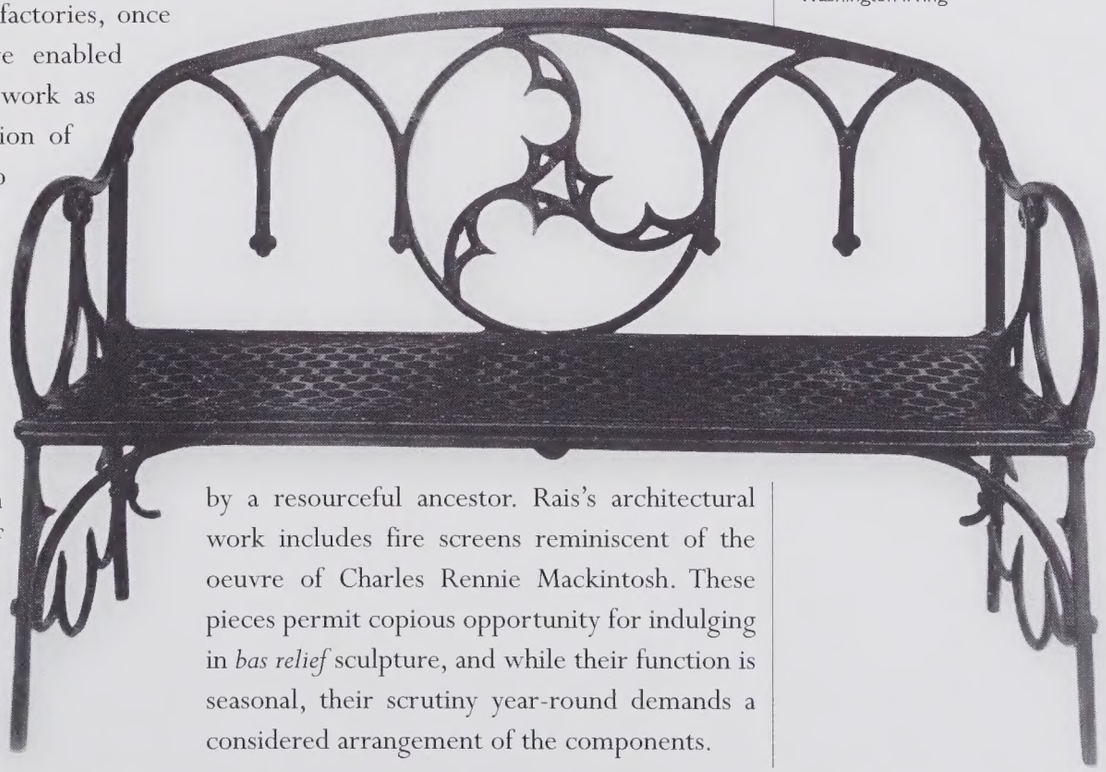
"Tubular steel furniture found its roots in the brave new world of modern art and architecture and the modernist preoccupation with the idea and image of the machine," argues Christopher Wilk in *Bent Wood and Metal Furniture*.[5] Marcel Breuer was inspired by the strength, lightness, and functionality of his bicycle to consider the use of bent and welded metal in the design of a chair. In 1925, he introduced the prototype for the *Wassily*. His contemporaries exploited the properties of steel to design cantilevered chairs: Stam worked with pipes and pipe fittings, while van der Rohe used thin steel tubing. In 1929-30, van der Rohe's *Brno* chair visually flattened the tubes into stainless steel bars. Eileen Gray adopted the metal ethic with a 1927 occasional table that combined chrome-plated tubular steel with painted metal sheet or glass. However, the major designers of the 1920s and '30s moved on to explore other materials and it was not until Harry Bertoia's and Charles Eames's designs in the 1950s that metal components were respected, once again, in the contemporary furniture market.

This brief summary of the history of metal furniture cites artists primarily as designers. The designs and their realization by industry were significant in the development of the processing of metal and the dissemination of technical information to a wider range of users. Advancements in the mills and factories, once scorned by Art Nouveau, have enabled contemporary studio artists to work as designer-makers in the production of metal furnishings. The artists who follow, employing hand- and machine-wrought techniques, qualify for Marcel Breuer's epithet "metal furniture is intended to be nothing but a necessary apparatus for contemporary life."[6]

It is appropriate to segue from a history lesson to the work of John Rais. Rais defines himself as a metalsmith, although he made his name as a blacksmith.[7] This trade, with the horseshoe as its icon, seems a throwback to eras long past. Indeed, Rais worked as the "village blacksmith" at a living history museum while in college, so he is respectful of the tradition and its current masters. He updates past practices in his use of materials: mild steel in combination with forgeable titanium, bronze, copper, brass and aluminum. Rais obtained his MFA from Cranbrook Academy of Art. In addition to honing his precision, he absorbed the architecture and three-dimensional design that permeates the Bloomfield Hills campus.

Advancements in the mills and factories, once scorned by Art Nouveau, have enabled contemporary studio artists to work as designer-makers in the production of metal furnishings.

Rais divides his output between vessels and architectural work. Some of the vessels are quick studies that have a sense of function, yet take a form not normally associated with that function; they provide an opportunity for experimentation that can be applied to works of larger scale. Rais says, "I make the objects that I wish I could find," and this *raison d'être* permits him ample leeway to experiment with design and materials. He describes some of his creations as "fictional tools." One recent work, *Basket Table*, implies functions that go beyond hosting objects on its planar surface. It is a quirky piece of furniture that might ordinarily be dismissed as just plain peculiar, yet its patina suggests it is an artifact, recently unearthed, crafted over time by a resourceful ancestor. Rais's architectural work includes fire screens reminiscent of the oeuvre of Charles Rennie Mackintosh. These pieces permit copious opportunity for indulging in *bas relief* sculpture, and while their function is seasonal, their scrutiny year-round demands a considered arrangement of the components.



West Point Foundry,
Cold Spring on Hudson, NY
Bench, c. 1836
cast iron
Courtesy Historic Hudson Valley,
Tarrytown, NY
Former Collection of
Washington Irving

Evan Lewis
Copper Bombe Chest, 1994
copper, steel, mahogany, patina
36 x 48 x 24"

Sean Calyer
Self Portrait of the Artist as a Bench,
2001
steel, paint
35 x 52 x 30"

Artist Jim Rose is also inspired by historical precedents, not in the realm of metal but in the tradition of American furniture making. After a trip to Shaker museums and settlements in New Lebanon and Old Chatham, New York and Hancock, Massachusetts, Rose embarked on a comprehensive replication of Shaker furnishings in steel. Thus far he has handcrafted over 130 pieces, including case goods, benches, chairs and clocks; his most recent project is recreating the familiar oval boxes out of found painted steel. The steel for all his work is salvaged from scrap yards and brushed and waxed so that the natural patinas allude to the aged wood of authentic Shaker works. The pieces are simply and cleanly defined and intended for practical daily use as were their predecessors. Rose is conscious of his appropriation of a coveted design aesthetic, but believes that his interpretations are respectful and celebratory of their origins. He continues to research the religious underpinnings of Shaker furniture, and hopes to document this body of work in a book as a homage to this powerful genre.

The work of Evan Lewis travels further back into the cobwebs of the furniture history attic. His *Copper Bombe Chest* of 1994 is inspired by a Louis XV *bombé commode*, a chest of drawers with outward-curving front and sides. Its structure is of steel tracery, to ensure that the fluidity of the original has not been lost. The body of the commode is patinated copper and the top is steel set in a mahogany surround. Lewis pays particular attention to the patinas on the copper, to imply the marquetry and lacquered surfaces of the Louis XV period. Lewis's method of drawer construction recalls the wood and metal chests from the Middle Ages that were intended for the storage of precious goods; he incorporates mahogany boxes within the copper to house the owner's treasures.

Lewis gained his knowledge of modernism at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago; his predilection for European decorative arts was fostered during travels after graduation. He indulges the spare aesthetic of modernism in his kinetic outdoor sculptures, which have been shown nationally; his furniture, on the other hand, is a chance to play with color, pattern, and surface decoration. Lewis began as a woodworker; hence, the complementary marriage of wood and metal in many of his pieces. This rich background ensures that he has fertile territory to explore as he continues to combine past and present.

Joseph and Georgia Pozycinski combine forces to create sculpture and furnishings that hearken back to the naturalism of mid-nineteenth-century garden furniture. Georgia has a background in zoology and pottery and is responsible for the finely detailed sea and land creatures and flora that are integrated into her husband's hammered, welded, and pressed forms. They work primarily in bronze, with the addition of steel as desired. *Nest Cabinet* has legs made from bonded sand molds cast from real sticks; the cabinet element is crafted of pounded and bent sheet silicon bronze that has been given a translucent hot patina and three coats of Renaissance wax. The cabinet was inspired by the crows that live in a neighboring forest, and houses natural treasures from Georgia's imagination. But there is room, too, to permit the owner to store small, precious objects. The function of this piece of furniture is to simply enhance a room by bringing the outdoors in.

Unlike artists who must rely on outside contractors to supply cast elements, the Pozycinskis put together a sculpture studio at moderate cost by scrounging equipment from high schools that were abandoning metal programs. Joseph can fabricate each component according to his schedule and standard, and considers the details of his business transactions—like meeting delivery deadlines—as important as the bird beaks and crab claws that grace his sculpture.

Paul Freundt's work has been acquired by

Joseph and Georgia Pozycinski *Nest Cabinet*, 2001 silicon bronze 61 1/2 x 16 x 14"

individuals as contemporary as Ted Turner and Elton John. He concentrates on seating and tables that take advantage of hollow construction in combination with formed and welded sheet metal. His materials of choice are steel, bronze, stainless steel and aluminum, whose surface texture and depth can be manipulated by a variety of means—patination, grinding, brushing. Freundt began as a sculptor, with an MFA from Georgia State University, and it is clear that his references are abstract, minimalist, lyrical, and kinetic. His love seats, chaises, and occasional chairs have the energy of a haphazard accretion of elements, which belie the ergonomics essential to their assemblage. Freundt tests his forms throughout the manufacturing process to ensure that the human body is well accommodated. And while Freundt's work might support the derrière of a rock musician, it is also part of the collection of the Renwick Gallery of the Smithsonian Museum.

While Freundt's work might support the derrière of a rock musician, it is also part of the collection of the Renwick Gallery of the Smithsonian Museum.

Furniture makes a statement, has presence and requires interaction: precisely why Gary Magakis progressed from making fashion accessories (belts, buckles, and jewelry) and table-top items to larger-scale sculpture to live with. Using techniques he learned more than 20 years ago on shop floors and factories, Magakis collaborates with his wife Carol, an architectural designer, to realize tables, benches, cabinets, and lamps. The husband-and-wife team is joined by their son, Eric, a graduate of Tyler School of Art in ceramics and a bluegrass musician, who does most of the welding. The output of their studio in central Philadelphia has a consistency of aesthetic that almost demands that the pieces have companions rather than stand alone; *Bronze Cube Table* seems meant to coexist with of their limited-edition floor lamps, the svelte lamp providing contrast to the *Table's* convex volume. Both objects are fabricated of bronze, steel, and copper. The pitted surface of *Table* speaks of age and use, much as an old butcher block honors its purpose and time on the job; the asymmetrical legs are a signature of the Magakis studio. Their portfolio also includes a bronze bench meant for outdoors: they have exploited the versatility of metal much like Karl Friedrich Schinkel in 1825.

Whereas the Magakis bench is linear and ground-hugging, Sean Calyer's works are characteristically dramatic, commanding the

Jim Rose
Enfield Settee, 2001
steel
33 x 77 1/2 x 17"

space around them. Calyer apprenticed with both Albert Paley and George Rickey: from the former he gained his design aesthetic; from the latter he acquired technical expertise and a willingness to try the untried. He welds and grinds sheet bronze, steel, and stainless steel into volumetric structures and often combines it with drum-taut rich leather upholstery. The marriage of tone, texture, and temperature is unfailingly sensual.

However, Calyer's *Self Portrait of the Artist as a Bench* has a different energy, based on broken tracery, color, and asymmetry. Its skeletal configuration reveals a bare-bones honesty about how the artist sees himself. Since this piece of furniture is a departure from Calyer's earlier work, he should be applauded for experimenting with materials and narrative content.

Dale Wedig considers "blacksmith" to be "too big a title" to adopt. He performs all of the requisite functions of a smith, yet is one of the most eclectic purveyors of the craft this side of Mount Olympus. Wedig's work ranges from small cast bronze anvil pins to multi-ton sculptures, as well as furniture which combines found elements. Wedig's ability to integrate seemingly disparate components into an object that also looks found, but found in its entirety, is witness to his imagination, sense of humor, and consummate skill. *Zig Table Bench* is a playful sketch of curved and angled broad lines; the application of lacquer separates the segments so that each one stands out yet harmonizes with the whole. Some of his furniture has the patina of time or the residue of original paint; other objects are more naturally finished so that form takes precedence and texture interests the eye. The assurance with which juxtaposition, complementarity, and contrast are handled in Wedig's furniture assemblages makes them welcome in the most sophisticated environments.

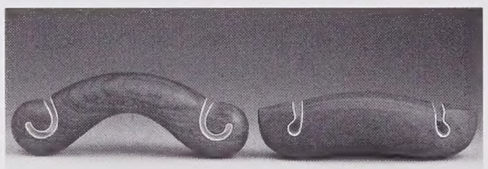
Wedig is a professor of metalsmithing and sculpture at Northern Michigan University, and his work emanates from the studio there. He eschews high-tech methods, such as a gas furnace, and relies upon coke (as in refined coal) and hammer and anvil to execute his commissions and gallery pieces. His process might be considered old-fashioned, but it accounts for his need for physical activity and preference for tradition. Wedig is the quintessential Hephaestus, pounding away in his smoky forge.

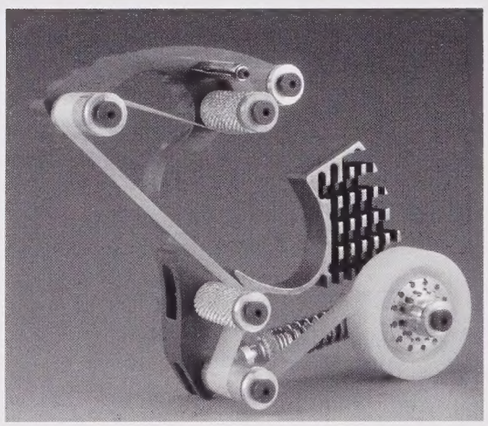
The journey from a 250 A.D. iron chair to these twenty-first-century Vulcans is an abridged testament to the vital genre of metal studio furniture. This brief survey is also an indication that mind and matter must coexist in art and craft. Even W.C. Aitken would be persuaded. ⧗

Dale Wedig
Zig Table Bench, 2000
steel
18 x 42 x 30"

D Wood is a freelance writer specializing in fine craft.

[1] Georg Himmelheber, *Cast-Iron Furniture and All Other Forms of Iron Furniture* (London: Philip Wilson, 1996), p. 65.
[2] *Webster's New World College Dictionary*, Third Edition, 1997.
[3] Himmelheber, p. 22.
[4] Himmelheber, p. 38.
[5] Christopher Wilk, "Furnishing the Future: Bent Wood and Metal Furniture, 1925-1946," in Derek E. Ostergard, ed. *Bent Wood and Metal Furniture: 1850-1946* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1987), p. 136.
[6] Marcel Breuer quoted in Wilk, p. 139.
[7] Black metal is the former name for iron. *Webster's New World College Dictionary.*

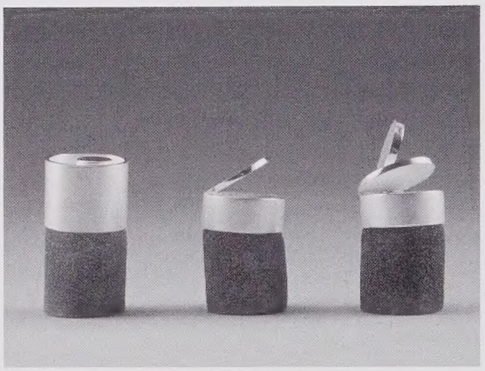




top to bottom
Hye-young Suh
Earrings + Plugs
sterling silver, dyed 3M hearing protectors
$1 \times 1/2 \times 1/2$"

Junghyun Woo
Handles I, II
padauk, walnut, sterling silver
$2 \times 5\ 3/4 \times 1\ 3/8$"

Frankie Flood
Tape Dispenser Bracelet
anodized aluminum, brass, steel, stainless steel, Scotch Magic Tape Roll
$4\ 1/2 \times 6\ 1/2 \times 1\ 3/4$"



"INNOVATIVE TOOLS FOR PERSONAL USE"

THE CENTER FOR VISUAL ARTS,
METROPOLITAN STATE COLLEGE
DENVER, CO
JUNE 6–26, 2002

by SUSAN MYERS

It is no coincidence that 3M, the company that brought us Scotch tape and Post-it notes, sponsored the competition and exhibition *Innovative Tools for Personal Use*. The exhibition premiered at the 2002 SNAG Conference in Denver, and was one of the best shows at the conference. All of the artwork was thoughtfully installed and presented. The juried group exhibit featured 75 artists selected from more than 180 entrants. The three jurors, silversmith Charles Crowley, studio jeweler Kiff Slemmons, and professor of American decorative arts at Yale University Edward S. Cooke, Jr., selected a wide range of work that thoroughly explored the competition's theme of "tools and toolmaking."

Much like 3M, metalsmiths supply our culture with objects whose primary function is to ease the burden of our lives. Dana Filibert's *Doughnut Dunker* may make our life easier, but also emphasizes the fact that we as a culture are becoming more and more inactive, and well, lazy. In case you are too tired to walk to the trashcan to deposit your used bubble gum, Carrie Perkins created four gum holder rings; *Chewed Up and Spit Out* fulfills a need we never realized we had. Each sterling silver ring is slightly different in design, showing off the manipulated form, texture, and color of the attached gum. Jeremy Waak's sterling silver and stainless steel *One Kernel Popcorn Popper* illustrates how the development of a particular tool for a specific task may not necessarily make our life any easier at all. Instead, this tool demands we work even harder to achieve the satisfying result of a handful of popcorn.

3M and artist Frankie Flood have both considered our need for a bracelet that dispenses tape. 3M's Scotch pop-up tape strip dispenser with elastic hand band spits out precut, 2-inch-long tape pieces. Instant office chic. But, if you need a 3-inch piece of tape or longer, or desire a more industrial look, I would recommend Flood's *Tape Dispenser Bracelet*. Both are intended to provide us with the speed and convenience we have come to expect in our society. However, 3M markets their product as delivering a hassle-free, one handed operation that prevents wasted tape; I am not sure Flood's artwork can deliver those same assurances. He has created a rather large wearable object out of anodized aluminum, brass, and steel that, like Waak's *One Kernel Popcorn Popper*, reveals that not all innovations are inherently useful or user-friendly. We are attracted to these objects because they are humorous in nature and play into our desire to be served and have our every need indulged. Presented in an art environment, these types of objects ask the viewer to rely on speculation to determine their function.

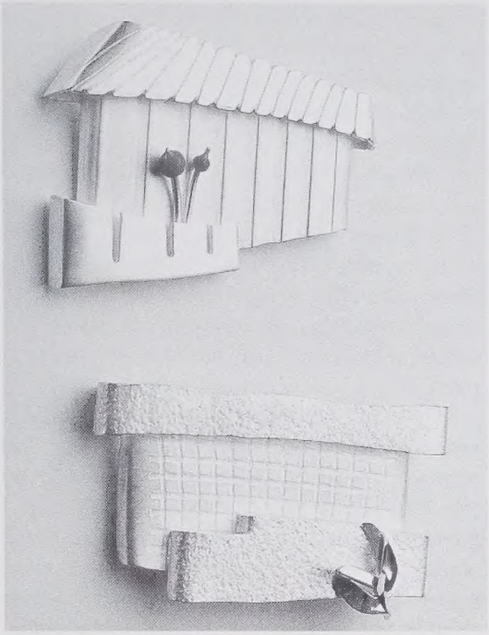
In contrast, many artists in the exhibition, including Susan Kingsley, Junghyun Woo, and Hye-young Suh, all rely upon our intimate familiarity with certain simple tools. The innovation behind these artworks lies in their ability to transcend the context of their utilitarian beginnings. In *Silver Set of Curves*, Kingsley has transformed various curved drawing templates into brooches. Typically these plastic tools, found in any art and architecture supply store, are used to create curved forms and ornamental designs. By changing the material and context of these tools, they become the decoration they are typically used to create. Kingsley reinforces this idea by exhibiting her works in sets that have been selectively arranged and displayed in wall-mounted cases.

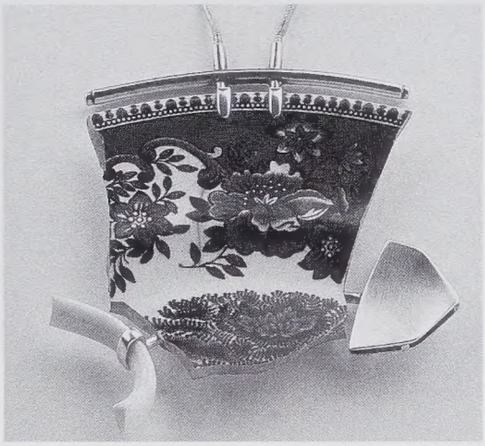
Similarly, Woo's *Handles I and II*, although seemingly very straightforward implements, have a well-defined space or notch cut out from each body, where a cord, rope, or wire can be inserted to put the wood handles into duty. The artist calls attention to this space by lining the inside of each notch with sterling silver. Both Woo and Kingsley value their "tools" more for their decorative qualities or status as fine art objects than for their functionality.

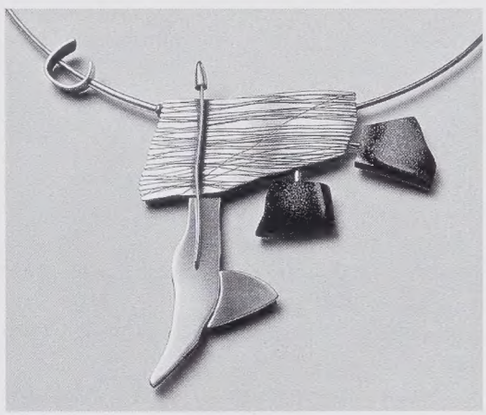
Hye-young Suh also transforms a familiar tool in her work *Earrings + Plugs*. Suh has dyed 3M foam hearing protectors in shades of green and blue, capping off one end of each with varying geometric designs of sterling silver, to create an interesting form of ear decoration. Unlike other art pieces that use foam earplugs, her work does not deny the original function of these tools by relegating the earplugs to a novelty decorative accent. Instead, Suh capitalizes on their function, while also changing the context in which these tools operate.

The exhibition included a large array of objects by more traditional metalsmiths as well. However, works like Myra Mimlitsch-Gray's *Melting Salver*, Dallae Kang's *A Happy Moment* ice cream cup, Robley Glover's *Flirtation Tea Servers*, Marc Maiorana's *Square Point of Past and Present* shovel, Rebecca Scheer's *Futensil: Silverware*, and Greg Gehner's *Choptensils* reveal the contemporary impulses of these artists. These artworks exemplify the drive within the metalsmithing field to rethink, and reanimate, the traditions of craft in a contemporary context.

Susan Myers is a visual artist and metalsmith who lives in Seattle, Washington.







"LARSEN & LEWERS: INSPIRED BY JEWELLERY"

THE EMBASSY OF AUSTRALIA,
WASHINGTON, D.C.
APRIL 24–MAY 24, 2002

by SARAH TANGUY

The jewelry of Helge Larsen and Darani Lewers suggests a nexus of possibilities, a crossroads of sorts where maker and wearer exchange sensual whispers, and where echoes of the past and hints of the future intersect. For three decades, the artists have enjoyed a rich and varied partnership. Larsen favors the cool and streamlined style of his native Denmark, while Lewers brings a painterly aesthetic. Together they engage in an exuberant exploration of indigenous cultures and landscapes for inspiration and source material. As much little sculptures as objects of adornment, their jewelry is easy to wear and possesses a talismanic charge. Termed "message bearers" by the artists, the work is intended to link private and public spheres, while increasing a feeling of stewardship of the environment and an awareness of how it has shaped us.

The exhibition featured 69 works, ranging from neckrings, pendants, brooches, to rings, which displayed a masterful control of the craft in metaphoric dialogue with the wilderness of the landscape and the chaotic remnants of prior civilizations. Larsen and Lewers's working process typically begins with field research of a certain site, which includes taking stunning color photographs and culling bazaars or seashores for a telling artifact or fragment. Exquisite line drawings follow, revealing a keen sense of rhythmic gesture. In the final distillation of these experiences, semiabstract compositions, in which passages of solid hues set off silver of varying finishes, coalesce into vivid harmonies of texture, line, and color.

The exhibition resembles a journey, with stops in Egypt, Denmark, and various regions in Australia. Highlights from the "Pharaonic" series include two neckrings, each with enigmatic charms composed of painted and carved wood and cast silver. Akin to stylized hieroglyphics, the charms appear to dance across the center of thin silver bands and become relief sculptures on the wearer's chest. In an earlier, two-finger ring, an African bone bead helps roll the ring into place, recalling the look and action of an abacus. Titled *Connections*, the piece underscores the importance of the artist-wearer relationship for Larsen and Lewers.

Larsen and Lewers entreat us to Australia's incredible richness of topography and history. The bones in the two-finger ring, brooch, and pendant from the "Lunette" series, for example, obliquely reference Lake Mungo's tumultuous past. Settled by Aborigines some 40,000 years ago, it is the oldest known site occupied by humans on the continent. Considered sacred by indigenous people, the area now recalls a lunar landscape, degraded from overgrazing by the animals of colonial settlers who arrived in the nineteenth century. Another work that evokes this region's colonial past is a neckring, in which a shard of pink porcelain stands in sharp contrast to the rough sheep shearers who left it behind. The artists' interpretation of the Outback—a vast, desolate region where the flatness of the land emphasizes the sky and clouds—is both subtle in spirit and highly articulated. In one two-finger ring, a flint stone protrudes like a tongue from a series of silver irregular, wavy lines that suggest eroded rocks. In a brooch from the same "Oodnadatta" series, the undulating silver bands read as cloud formations, and a found stone corresponds to the land.

The shoreline takes center stage in several works, as the ever-changing border between land and water. In the brooch *Forty Baskets*, a green, shimmering fragment from a beer bottle bisects juts of silver. While the glass ridges become gentle ripples, the metal suggests algae or coral responding to currents. Another highlight is a two-finger ring from the "Guerella" series. Here, a disc of mother of pearl reads as a watery surface from which abstract groupings of silver and a worn volcanic black rock emerge. The narrative action is more pronounced in a neckring from the "Bermagui" series, named for a region where offshore whaling used to occur. Like a miniature seascape, the composition brings together a flattened piece of delicately incised silver, which suggests the ocean, two black ceramic shards found on the coast, and a silver harpoon atop a smooth, silver whale, seen in profile.

Australia's mining history forms the basis for the architecturally inflected "Silver City" series, based on Broken Hill. Established in the 1880s, the colonial town in its heyday resembled mining towns in the Western United States, with banks and hotels on every corner but without the crime. Following World War II, the boom waned, leaving behind miners' cottages and landfills soon weathered by the year-round harsh sunshine. In one silver brooch, the representational allusion to a corrugated cottage is elaborated to the point of including bits of red coral to suggest the flowers of a potted window plant. In another silver brooch, a crosshatched passage reads as a louvered window between sections, with a motley surface resembling pressed tin. The exhibition included a stunning pendant, a very personal piece titled *Traces*. The piece takes its cue from a large shard of a Chinese Export ceramic plate that the artists found in the semi-bush outgrowth of their own backyard in Seaforth, a suburb of Sydney. To suggest a tea party, they added a silver form in the shape of a silver cake cutter and the handle of a teacup.

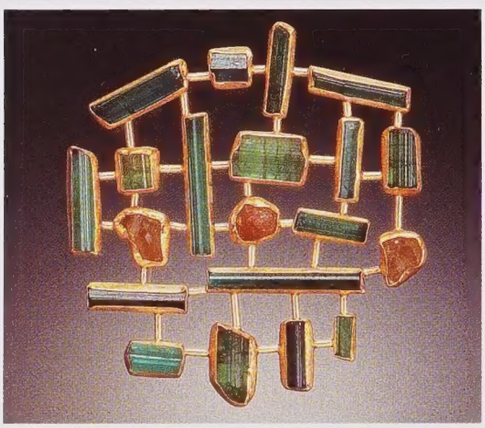
Judging from this exhibition, it is easy to see why Larsen and Lewers have garnered so much attention in other parts of the world; we can only hope that their American debut will lead to many more venues and exposure in this country. Their choice of material and abstracted forms gracefully evoke both the contrasting rhythms of nature and the often contentious layers of civilizations. When viewing their work, and no doubt even more so when wearing their jewelry, we feel part of a larger continuum that reaches deep into the past, alights for a while in the present, and presses forward into some indefinite future.

Sarah Tanguy is a writer and independent curator in Washington, D.C.

clockwise from top left
Silver City (brooches), 2002
sterling silver
2 x 2 3/8"
1 1/2 x 2 3/8"

Traces (pendant), 2002
sterling silver, ceramic shard
3 1/2 x 4"

Bermagui (pendant), 2002
sterling silver, ceramic shards
7 x 10 1/4"



top to bottom
Alexandra Solowij Watkins
Untitled, 2002
after Kazimir Malevich's *Suprematist Painting*
red coral, black jade, 24k and 18k gold
$1\,^3/_8 \times 2$"

Kevin Coates
A Collar for the Hound of Farinelli, 2002
after Jacope Amigone's *The Singer Farinelli and his Friends*
parcel gilt and patinated silver, leather, velvet, carnelian
$1\,^1/_2 \times 6\,^1/_2 \times\,^1/_8$"

Petra Class
Untitled, 2002
after Piet Mondrian's *Facade in Tan and Grey*
18k and 22k gold, tourmaline, crystals, yellow beryl
$2\,^1/_2 \times 3$"

Todd Reed
Untitled, 2002
after Gustav Klimt's *Portrait of Emile Floge*
garnets, iolites, uncut and cut diamonds, 14k, 18k, and 22k gold
$2\,^3/_8 \times\, 3\,^1/_2$"

"JEWELRY FROM PAINTING"

MOBILIA GALLERY, CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS
FEBRUARY 21–MARCH 30, 2002

by PATRICIA HARRIS AND DAVID LYON

Continuing their series of themed exhibitions, Libby and Joanne Cooper of Mobilia Gallery invited approximately 70 artists to investigate the interplay of painting and jewelry. The resulting works drew on sources as varied as Pompeiian wall paintings, Persian miniatures, old masters, and Pop Art to demonstrate an almost infinite discourse between the disciplines.

Even artists who chose to directly translate imagery from paintings managed to create fresh work. Ramona Solberg's *Cougar Necklace* was modeled on a bear-claw necklace worn by an Iowa chieftain in one of George Catlin's early-19th-century paintings. To set off mountain lion claws presented to her as a gift, Solberg used early trade materials—abalone, shells, beads—as well as bronze and silver to create a thoroughly modern tribal necklace. Solberg's literal approach contrasts with Marcia Macdonald's witty homage to Peter Paul Rubens. Inspired by the vigorous brushstrokes with which Rubens rendered a string of pearls in a portrait, Macdonald painted wooden beads to look like pearls, then attached an elaborate metal catch that spells out "trompe l'oeil," lest anyone be fooled.

Other jewelers indulged enduring obsessions with specific works of art, though none with more wit than Kevin Coates. Inspired by a 1751 painting by Jacopo Amigoni, *The Singer Farinelli and his Friends*, Coates created a necklace modeled on the collar of Farinelli's hunting hound, right down to the raised initials. Art-historical references animate the work: The back of the collar incorporates the Calatrava cross shown around Farinelli's neck in Amigoni's painting, while the bell attached to the front of the collar rings in B-flat, the key of the sheet music on the famous *castrato*'s lap.

Axel Russmeyer's works were far less arcane. Russmeyer découpaged art posters of fifteenth-century portraits by Petrus Christus and Antonio Pollaiuolo onto the fronts of boxes, then made small circular cutouts to excise the earrings worn by the portrait subjects. He then filled the holes with dangling earrings of Russmeyer's signature bead-encrusted beads. When the wall-mounted boxes are opened, the austere portraits reveal jewelry-box interiors, each with three beaded necklaces that the portrait subject might have worn.

Although many jewelers cited Gustav Klimt, the master of sinuous line linking geometric forms, as their inspiration, the resulting pieces showed only a passing resemblance. Todd Reed acknowledged that the origin of his cuff bracelet of gold, diamonds, garnets, and iolites lay in several Klimt portraits, most of Emilie Flöge. The intricate nest of goldwork suggests some of Klimt's highly elaborated backgrounds, while Reed's skillful use of different-colored golds, oxidized silver, and gold and silver dust gives the piece a shimmering quality reminiscent of Klimt's most fervent Secessionist paintings.

In contrast, Elizabeth MacDevitt created a series of simple and restrained bracelets and rings that deconstructed the neck rings worn by the Biblical Judith in Klimt's 1901 *Judith I* painting. Incorporating the painter's patterns, textures, and colors—even the same moonstones and opals—MacDevitt's series emphasized her luxuriant classical goldsmithing. Flora Book's exquisite bracelet, *In the Aura of Klimt*, made no reference to a specific painting. But Book's nine trapezoidal panels of colored glass bead compositions, fanning out from a silver-bead circle, capture the almost infinite dappling of patterned color characteristic of Klimt's flowing textiles and backgrounds. Book's evocation is so successful that it poses the question, Was Klimt trying to emulate the effects of colored glass beadwork?

Many jewelers were stirred by the formal considerations of twentieth-century abstraction. Cynthia Eid's sterling silver brooch based on Kenneth Noland's *Par Transit*, for example, translated the squashed diamond of Noland's painting into ribbed and crimped silver inset with tiny silver balls. Petra Class's brooch, *After Mondrian*, presented an array of green stones in gold settings in a network that recalls Mondrian's grid structures of the 1930s.

Two of the most intriguing pieces addressed the use of color in abstract art. Early in his career, the Russian painter Kasimir Malevich (1878-1935) briefly flirted with pure abstraction, and Alexandra Solowij Watkins perfectly captured his heady exploration of color with a stunning pin of red coral and black jade set in gold. Nancy Michel set antique Tibetan amber, ebony, and wood in gold to emulate the tactile sensuality of Arthur Dove's best paintings, her warm materials making the jeweler's equivalent of Dove's muted pigments.

Ultimately, what was so remarkable about "Jewelry from Painting" was not how well the artists interpreted another work of art, but how well virtually every piece in the show stood on its own.

Patricia Harris and **David Lyon** are writers and critics based in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

"ZERO KARAT: THE DONNA SCHNEIER GIFT TO THE AMERICAN CRAFT MUSEUM"

AMERICAN CRAFT MUSEUM,
NEW YORK CITY
MAY 30–SEPTEMBER 9, 2002

by BRUCE METCALF

The so-called "New Jewelry" exploded on the international jewelry scene in the 1980s, although it was anticipated by European experimental work in the '70s, and even earlier developments in the United States. The New Jewelry was, at its heart, an abandonment of timidity: traditional Western jewelry had been small, compact, carefully crafted, and often composed of precious materials, and had not adopted the Modernist tendency for critical self-examination. The New Jewelry blasted all the old rules. Suddenly jewelry could be big, outgoing, casually made. It could be fashioned of any material at all, and it could examine the ends and means of jewelry with a deeply critical eye.

"Zero Karat," the exhibit of a selection from collector Donna Schneier's recent gift to the American Craft Museum, was largely devoted to the New Jewelry and its influences. The two benchmark exhibitions of the New Jewelry in the '80s were "The Jewellery Project," a 1983 show of Malcolm and Abigale Knapp's collection that was not seen in the U.S., and "New Departures in British Jewelry," shown at the American Craft Museum in 1983. While Schneier did not see either of them, she saw a slightly later exhibition at the British Crafts Centre in 1985, and she was hooked. Schneier ran a commercial jewelry business at the time, and the exhibit must have been a revelation to her. She started purchasing work, initially to decorate the walls of her office; those early purchases became a collection, and the collection became an important record.

Many of the works in "Zero Karat," once revolutionary, are now icons, including Otto Künzli's *Gold Makes You Blind* (1980), his famous black rubber bracelet with a gold bead hidden inside. Also exhibited were Caroline Broadhead's wonderful colored monofilament *Veil Collar* (1982), several of Lam de Wolf's textile neckpieces, a couple of Marjorie Schick's painted-stick pieces from 1987, and one of Robert Ebendorf's collage-on-bead necklaces from 1985. To any jeweler who remembers the '80s or who has studied critic Ralph Turner's books, "Zero Karat" was a fond look back at a particular moment. It was almost nostalgic.

Even though this work now occupies the art-jewelry mainstream, its original intent was to challenge and even to shock. In a 1983 speech, Ralph Turner introduced the New Jewelry to a Toronto audience, in which he declared that all other types of jewelry were henceforth *defunct*. That was his exact word—and it drove the audience nuts! Presumably, Turner thought the New Jewelry would be like a Marxist revolution, relegating bourgeois jewelry to the ashcan of history. No self-respecting jeweler could possibly use gold after seeing a Susanna Heron wearable! Similarly, Verena Sieber-Fuchs claimed that her jewelry was anti-capitalist. In retrospect, such claims were naive. Turner and Sieber-Fuchs hoped for an absolute rupture from the bad old days of preciousness and fine craft (and complacency and capitalism), but it never happened.

Instead of fomenting revolution, the work in "Zero Karat" cleared an expanded field for jewelers. The ultimate outcome was not a true revolution, but a broader pluralism. The radical revisions proposed by the New Jewelry are now common assumptions. No jeweler is required to be timid any more: one can work large, in any material, and engage any issue.

Meanwhile, back in the real world, the American Craft Museum assumed that their average viewer still hadn't heard the news. Text panels and labels were consistently pitched to convince a skeptical public that jewelry can, indeed, be bigger than Mom's brooch, or could even be made of rubber! These are exactly the same points made in exactly the same museum 20 years ago. The implication is that this new pluralism has occurred strictly within the confines of a small art-jewelry clique, and completely under the radar of the general public. The further implication is that craft institutions are too insignificant to incite any decisive change on the wider culture, and that cutting-edge craft has no real power.

So, there was a curious ambiguity about "Zero Karat." On one hand, most of the work is deeply optimistic, proposing a more open and pluralistic culture of jewelry, and proposing by analogy that the wider culture could do the same. The jewelry on view remains fresh and relevant precisely because of this optimism. On the other hand, the exhibition declared that not much has really changed, and that was a little depressing.

Donna Schneier's gift to the American Craft Museum shows how a collection can be transformed into a public service. Maybe this time around, people will get the idea that jewelry can be big, theatrical, or even political. Along with the exhibition and catalogue "Messengers of Modernism," "Zero Karat" will stand as an important record of a singular moment in jewelry history.

Bruce Metcalf is a jeweler and occasional writer living in Bala Cynwyd, PA.

clockwise from top left
Caroline Broadhead
Veil Collar, 1982
monofilament, dye
$11\,1/2 \times 1\,3/4$" (expandable)

Verena Sieber-Fuchs
Apart-heid, 1988
fruit-wrapping tissue paper, wire
diameter 16"

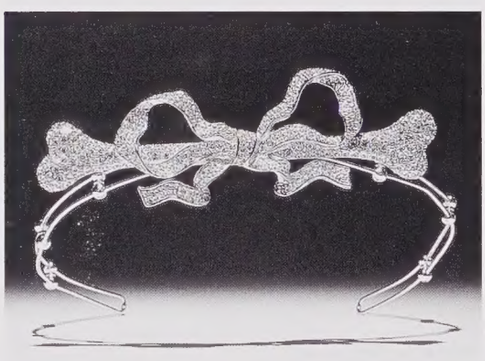
Marjorie Schick
Bracelet, 1987
wood, rubber
$6\,1/2 \times 8\,1/2$"

Otto Künzli
Gold Makes You Blind, 1980
rubber, enclosed gold ball
$3\,3/28 \times 3\,3/4 \times 1/2$"

"TIARAS"

VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM, LONDON
MARCH 21–JULY 14, 2002

by DEIRDRE O'DAY



top to bottom
Jan Yager
Invasive Species, 2001
oxidized silver, 18k gold

Diadem, c.1895
based on a Greek third-century diadem from Melos
gold, enamel, hessonite garnet

Vivienne Westwood
Tiara, 1997
rhinestones, base metal

By 1900, fifty American women had married into the British aristocracy. Schooled in etiquette, these wives of peers were well prepared for this lifestyle and accustomed to indulging themselves in the finest jewelry from Cartier, Boucheron, and Tiffany, which they displayed at New York dances as formal as any in Europe. The gem-encrusted tiara, whose origins lie in the wreaths and diadems of antiquity, flourished; thousands were being made in London, Paris, and St. Petersburg. American patronage significantly benefited the European jewelry trade, and an American preference for platinum over silver and gold boosted its popularity.

Symbols of power, wealth and status, and love and marriage, tiaras are rich in history and anecdote: a frosted gold and porcelain orange blossom wreath was a wedding anniversary present to Queen Victoria in 1845 from its designer, her beloved husband Prince Albert; an 1830s coral tiara, donned by British couturier Vivienne Westwood while bicycling around London, was originally owned by the acclaimed nineteenth-century actress Sarah Siddons. The Victoria and Albert's exhibition picks up the tiara's history in the late eighteenth century, when it re-emerged during the period of French neo-classicism, and follows its progress through dynastic generations, in an eclectic repertory of classical and botanical designs and Oriental, Indian, Egyptian, and Russian influences, to its revival in the final decades of the twentieth century, transformed by the ironic and irreverent mood of that era.

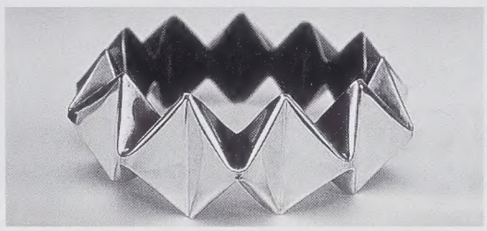
The most interesting pieces in the show are the instances when tiara design departed from its rigid traditional base to test out new ideas and reinvent itself: the pure, uncluttered lines of nineteenth-century examples in non-precious materials like carved coral, jet, and iron; the dazzling technical virtuosity of Italian "Archaeological" diadems, like one of twisted gold with a Hercules knot, based on a third-century Grecian model. Later, under the purifying influence of Modernism, the Cartier firm, ever responsive to changes in taste, developed elegant geometric designs such as the sunburst tiara of 1927, a glittering arc of diamond-set platinum emanating from a central star sapphire. Many of Cartier's hair ornaments were designed for versatility, and converted into brooches, necklaces, and earrings. Cartier London created the lightweight, flexible bandeau, more diadem than crown. Worn across the forehead, it was a practical and stylish solution for the 1920s sleekly cropped hair, which was unsuited to supporting weighty traditional tiaras.

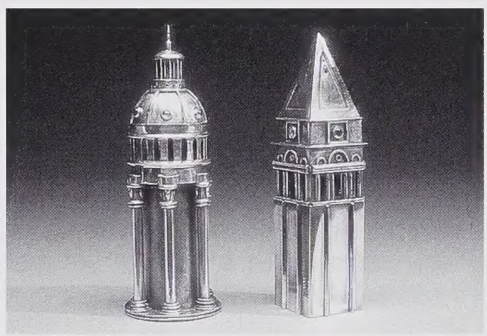
But the most radical break with tradition emerged at the fin de siècle, with Art Nouveau and the Arts and Crafts movement, when artists such as René Lalique in Paris and Fred Partridge in England rejected the repetitious traditional styles and created individual works of art. Favoring design over function and intrinsic value, and incorporating non-precious, lighter materials such as horn and aluminum, they helped pave the way for the new ideas of the twentieth century. It is in part this radical spirit that has been reinvigorated today, with the tiara again in vogue.

Today's clientele comes from a vastly different social spectrum: largely celebrities of the film, TV, and pop worlds such as Sharon Stone, Elton John, and Madonna. Modern tiaras remain ineffably glamorous, though are not necessarily composed of precious materials. Couturiers like Westwood have demystified and accessorized them; her Matisse tiara, a rippling ribbon of yellow acrylic, was designed in tandem with a dress evoking Matisse's late paper cutouts. Westwood parodies the very concept of the tiara with a beribboned dog bone close-set with rhinestones, as does Dai Rees's rhinestone-studded silver sheep's pelvis trailing crystal pendants. This contemporary section sparkles with wit, color, and ideas. Wendy Ramshaw's polished steel openwork headpiece recalls Byzantine splendor, while Kevin Coates's *Entry of the Queen of the Night* is as richly worked as a Renaissance jewel. Among the seven American jewelers represented, Jack de Silva's *Bull Market*, a sculptural horned bull's head, is a droll critique of stock market greed. And Jan Yager celebrates the power of nature with a tall oxidized silver and gold frieze of urban weeds, as majestic as a Russian Kokoshnik.

When Jamie Lee Curtis attended the opening of the British Parliament in 1988, the wheel turned full circle. Her head was crowned with a golden wreath made for her by her friend Cathy Waterman; for like her nineteenth-century American sisters, Curtis is the wife of a British peer.

Deirdre O'Day, a former curator of jewelry at the Victoria & Albert museum, is a writer on jewelry and fine and decorative arts and a BBC researcher.





"50 YEARS IN THE MAKING: THE BAY AREA METAL ARTS GUILD 1951-2001"

VELVET DA VINCI, SAN FRANCISCO
MARCH 15–APRIL 14, 2002

by JENNIFER CROSS GANS

The Metal Arts Guild, one of the oldest organizations of art jewelers and sculptors in America, was founded by such "messengers of modernism" as Margaret de Patta, Peter Macchiarini, and merry renk. The high point of its 50th anniversary was a retrospective show of the work of 66 member artists, past and present, curated by Mike Holmes and Elizabeth Shypertt of Velvet da Vinci gallery, and metalsmith Imogene (Tex) Gieling.

Despite limited exhibition space, the show combined jewelry, sculpture, tableware, and flatware with old Metal Arts Guild photographs, posters, and show catalogues. "We looked for examples of good design from the '50s onwards, and work that would show the variety and vitality of West Coast work," said Holmes and Shypertt, both of whom are trained metalworkers. While a few local notables, such as Bob Winston and Marty Streick, were absent, the show still represented an impressive shapshot of the last half-century of art jewelry and metal.

It was a pleasure to see pieces by late artists as Margaret de Patta, Peter Macchiarini, and Carrie Adell, or who, like merry renk, are no longer producing. It was also a special insider pleasure to see the early work of people who later became mature and successful artists. Examples of the "I can't believe he/she actually did THAT!" department were an industrial-strength scarab and a candlestick in silver, 24k, and calf bone fabricated by Abrasha, and three rings in ivory, ebony, and gold created by Alan Revere (all 1977). A boat bowl (1955) and wall piece (1964) by June Schwarcz were basically high-class street enamels, and a far cry from her later, museum-quality electroformed, enameled vessels. On the other hand, artists such as Heidi Nahser and Jack and Marilyn da Silva seemed to enter the art metals scene fully formed, though their work may yet develop in unknown directions.

The show also includes the early work of artists who later built a reputation elsewhere, such as Win Ng, who contributed a small enameled bowl (1955), but went on to cofound and run the successful San Francisco store Taylor and Ng. Sculptor Irene Brynner, who had already transitioned into jewelry in the 1960s, established her main reputation in New York. Still others have managed to combine jewelrymaking with teaching, notably Alan Revere (founder and head of the Revere Academy), local college professors Marilyn and Jack da Silva, Dawn Nakanishi, Julia Turner, Helene S-French, and emeritus professors Tex Gieling, Florence Resnikoff, and Lynda Watson.

So what are the major trends that have emerged over the last 50 years? How far has art jewelry come—or is it "*plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose?*" It is a little risky to generalize about trends in 147 pieces of work produced over a 50-year time span. However, one obvious difference is that many of the early artists were not originally trained as jewelers. If they had formal training at all, it was more likely in sculpture, painting or fine art, design, or ceramics, and their work more closely represented trends in those disciplines. Almost all the younger artists have had formal jewelry training, which many have supplemented by one or more years working for an established jeweler to hone their skills.

The market has also changed during the last half-century. Buyers during the '50s and '60s were frequently interested in art jewelry as a novelty, and the chance to make a personal statement of artistic and political preference. Today's statement of social identity (or rebellion) is more likely to be a tongue stud or tattoo. However, a newer phenomenon is the collector of art jewelry (it's an interesting coincidence that the Art Jewelry Forum was launched in the Bay area). There are also increasing numbers of people who may or may not consider themselves serious collectors, but appreciate the value and understand the cost of art jewelry, and certainly wouldn't patronize the jewelry counter at Macy's.

Styles have also evolved since MAG's early days. Many of the juried pieces, especially those by Melissa Borrell, Julia Turner, and Carol Windsor, reflected a new view of mass: less sculptural, and more likely to be achieved by clusters of shapes, giving the appearance of solidity combined with lightness.

Other newer work carried the artist's overt personal message. Judith Hoffman's *Spectacles for Seeing Fish* (1988) was inspired by myth and fantasy. Lynda Watson's *Aerial View* neckpiece reflected her enduring interest in geography and traveling. Brooke Battles's brooch, neckpiece, and bracelet were inspired by the urban scene; Marleen Seckendorf's neckpiece by her interest in nature.

Experimentation with alternative materials was a constant theme, particularly in the newer work. Artists combined metal with paper (Carol Windsor), latex (Christine Dhein), gourds (Ellen Cheek), steel wire (Angela Hennesy), wood (Julia Turner), sea glass (Eileen Gerstein) and pebbles (Deborah Boskin).

Experimentation with enamels produced some excellent, nontraditional work, including three accordion brooches, torch-enameled by Deborah Lozier, and two pieces by April Higashi, using solid masses of opaque colors.

One of the oddest pieces in the show, which certainly deserved recognition for imagination, versatility, and craftsmanship was John Donivan's Box: *Curious Item Found in the Wooded Glen*, patiently fabricated over a seven-year period (1993–2000). Modeled after a Victorian toilet or writing box, it was constructed from sterling silver, koa, mahogany, ebony, paper veneer, agate, *mokume gane*, and jade, and contained whimsical pots and implements that would be perfectly at home with Harry Potter and company.

One of the show's enduring legacies was hopefully its educational value, not only for the jewelry cognoscenti but for the many visitors who had little or no knowledge of art jewelry or its history.

Jennifer Cross Gans is a writer and studio jeweler in San Francisco.

clockwise from top left
Carol Windsor
Brooch, 2001
sterling and fine silver, rice paper, petrified sharks' teeth
3 x 4 1/2"

Lynda Watson
Aerial View (neckpiece), 1973
sterling silver
10 x 12"

merry renk
Hairband, 1953
fine silver
diameter 6"

Heidi Nahser
Salt and Pepper Shakers, 1992
sterling silver, peridot, amethyst, garnet, moonstone, aquamarine
6 x 2"

COMMISSIONS

by Elizabeth Broadrup Lieberman

Martha Jo Benson
Commemorative Baptismal Bowl, 2002
sterling silver, 24k gold wash, mabe pearl
diameter 14"
Commissioned by Corwin and Kay Stephan with Curtis and Molly Stephan for Northminster Presbyterian Church

Barbara Berk
Interlocking Hearts Necklace, 2001
950 platinum, 14k white gold, cultured pearls
length 15 1/2"
Commissioned by private client
Photo: Dana Davis

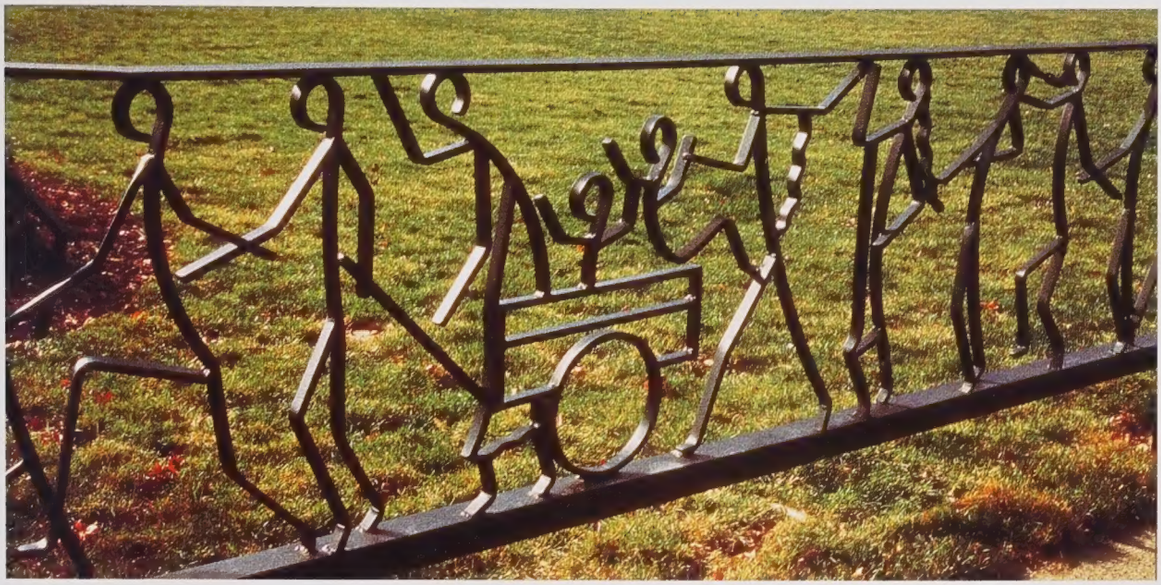
Martha Jo Benson, *Commemorative Baptismal Bowl*, 2002

In the new sanctuary built as an addition to Northminster Presbyterian Church in Ames, Iowa, an unusual baptismal font stands beneath a skylight. The font's square wooden base, each side ornamented with a minimalist cross in black-painted steel, supports a well filled with water. Water flows into the well from a fountain of rough-edged slate circles stacked vertically at its center. Project architects Rudi/Lee/Dreyer designed this contemporary font before commissioning local metalsmith Martha Jo Benson to create the baptismal bowl also used in the Christian sacrament. Benson received no design stipulations from the church committee overseeing the commission. Inspired by sunshine from the skylight above the font, as well as the fountain's irregularly shaped slate circles, Benson designed a bowl in an abstract floral shape. Sixteen sterling silver "petals" radiate from a gold-washed center basin. Benson constructed the bowl by hand-hammering 18-inch-square sheets of 18-gauge sterling silver. She made the "petals" by cutting the silver into slices, bending them to overlap and then soldering the seams. To protect against water leakage, Benson inserted a raised 18-gauge silver bowl into the larger bowl's base and plated it with 24k gold wash. A solitary mabe pearl (a "half-pearl," flat on one side) glows pink on the well's rim. Benson added the pearl in memory of the church committee's chairwoman, who died before the bowl was completed.

The baptismal bowl, which rests on a stainless steel support atop the font, was dedicated at a service in May 2002. Funds for the new font were donated by the Stephan family, and several of the donors' grandchildren were baptized that day.

Barbara Berk, *Interlocking Hearts Necklace*, 2001

Barbara Berk's jewelry first caught the eye of her client, an interior designer, in a California gallery. Impressed with the distinctively woven precious metal pieces, the client contacted Berk to inquire about custom jewelry commissions. Berk's collaborative relationship with her client helped her to solve a perplexing design problem. She had created a new interchangeable necklace centerpiece with an interlocking heart design, and constructed the prototype hearts in silver, using a Soumak rug-weaving technique. When applied to metal, this traditional textile technique uses two different sizes of wire; the thinner horizontal wire (the weft) wraps around each of the thicker, vertical warp wires to create individual stitches. Berk wove the metal flat, then shaped it into interlocking hearts. When she tried to use the hearts as an interchangeable centerpiece, however, she was unsatisfied with the necklace's "aesthetically klutzy" connector mechanisms that competed with, rather than complementing, the hearts. Berk abandoned work on the necklace until her client noticed it on the studio bench. The client suggested a different approach: make the interlocking hearts a permanent centerpiece and use a mystery clasp in the back of the necklace. Delighted with this solution, Berk designed the necklace to her client's specifications, with the heart centerpiece made of platinum and centered on a strand of 28 South Sea baroque cultured pearls. Using dense platinum wire, rather than silver or gold, slowed the metal-weaving process; fabrication required approximately 30 bench hours. Pleased with the *Interlocking Hearts Necklace*, Berk's client subsequently ordered companion pearl earrings and a stickpin.



Brinsley Tyrrell
Orchard Fence (detail), 2001–02
wrought iron
566 x 44 x 3"
Blacksmith: Steve Jordan, with assistance from Eric Oldham
Commissioned by ParkWorks and Cleveland Public Art

Brinsley Tyrrell, *Orchard Fence*, 2001–02

What was until recently an empty 2.5-acre parking lot on the grounds of Orchard Elementary School is now a grassy lawn featuring new playground equipment, all enclosed by Brinsley Tyrrell's whimsical *Orchard Fence*. Before the transformation, students at the urban Cleveland school were restricted from playing outside. Now, the park offers outdoor classroom and recess activities for students, as well as after-school recreation and a gathering place for neighborhood residents. ParkWorks, a private non-profit organization dedicated to improving the quality of life in Cleveland through parks and greenspace, planned the school's new play area as the model for its "School Grounds as Community Parks" program. Initially, plans called for a chain link fence with ornamental gates to enclose the school's grounds, but landscape architects recommended artist Brinsley Tyrrell as the designer after seeing his sculptural ironwork at the Cleveland Botanical Garden. Tyrrell suggested a figurative wrought-iron fence to surround the new park. ParkWorks approved and, in partnership with Cleveland Public Art, granted him the commission, budgeted at $49,000 for all design, materials, labor, and installation. Tyrrell designed *Orchard Fence* as a 30-inch-high frieze depicting simple figures of children at play. They ride bicycles, skateboards, and wheelchairs; make music in marching and mariachi bands; climb trees, walk dogs, and more. The linear design, which Tyrrell describes as "one long story or poem," never repeats a pattern in its entire 566-foot length. Barely visible ground posts anchor the fence at 10-foot intervals, and the figures themselves angle slightly, providing additional structural stability between borders. Blacksmith Steve Jordan fabricated and welded the wrought iron fence, assisted in bending and grinding by Eric Oldham, as well as Tyrrell. They installed the fence in 10-foot panels, welding it on site as new sections were completed, to the joy of students and neighbors alike.

Enid Kaplan, *New Beginning*, 2001

As a wedding gift to his new wife, Norman Gadol decided to commission a figurative sculpture for the garden of the couple's New Jersey home. Intrigued by the late Enid Kaplan's metal and mixed-media work on view at SOFA New York, he contacted the artist to discuss his idea. Gadol envisioned a sculpture that would symbolize "the blossoming of a new life" for him and his wife, both formerly widowed. Kaplan suggested an emerging "earth/heaven goddess" to represent the beginning of this new marriage. She made several sketches and modified the one that Norman Gadol favored. Since she had never created a three-dimensional work on such a dramatically large scale, the artist initially explored technical concerns by fashioning her design as an earring in sterling silver and 14-karat gold wire, then as a half-scale model. Ultimately, *New Beginning* stands more than eight feet tall, a primal female figure rising from the earth, encircled by strands of swirling hair. Kaplan chose copper for the torso because "copper feels more like a body to me." Working with three assistants, she shell-formed 16-gauge copper sheets to create the body; a steel armature provides support within the form. Kaplan and her crew arranged the wreath of hair by forcefully bending 12-foot-long, 3/8-inch-thick brass rods into place. After two months of fabrication, Kaplan installed *New Beginning* at the center of a stone spiral in Norman and Phyllis Gadol's blooming garden in June 2001.

Enid Kaplan
New Beginning, 2001
copper, brass, steel, stone
102 x 48 x 42"
Assistants: Gustavo Estrada, Tino Petronzio, Dzian Lacharite
Commissioned by Norman and Phyllis Gadol
Photo: Paul Fournier

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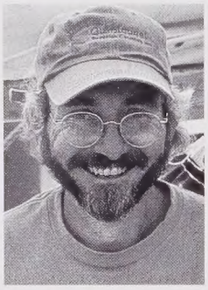

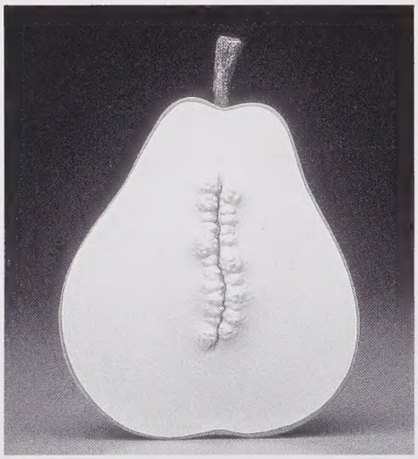

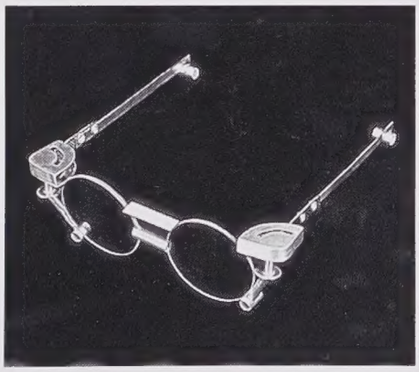

New Board Members Elected

The SNAG membership recently elected three new members to its board of directors: president-elect Ken Bova (studio jeweler, part-time educator), Karen Christians (studio jeweler, owner of Metalwerx gallery), and Jim Cohen (studio jeweler, graduate student). A fourth new board member, Tara Stephenson (SUNY Buffalo State), was appointed to fill the seat of Lin Stanionis, who resigned for personal reasons. SNAG sincerely thanks the outgoing board members for all their hard work: Thomas Mann, Bruce Metcalf, Lin Stanionis, and the immediate past president Donald Friedlich, who shepherded the organization through three years of substantial transition, including the hiring of its first full-time executive director.

New Editorial Committee Member Appointed

Mary Douglas has replaced John Perreault on the *Metalsmith* Editorial Advisory Committee (EAC). She joins EAC members Barbara Minor, Claire Sanford, Linda Threadgill (chair), Jan Baum (board liaison), and *Metalsmith* editor Suzanne Ramljak. Douglas is currently curator of collections at Southern Highland Craft Guild, Asheville, North Carolina. Previously, she was curator of craft and design at the Mint Museum of Craft + Design. Douglas is also a practicing metalsmith with an MFA from Cranbrook Academy and a James Renwick Fellow, who has written extensively on the arts.

SNAG Awards Educational Endowment Scholarships

The Educational Endowment Scholarship is SNAG's highest award offered to students. The 2002 recipients are Hye-Young Suh and Yuyen Chang. Hye-Young Suh is a second-year graduate at University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, studying under Billie Jean Theide. Yuyen Chang is entering her final year of the MFA program at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, studying under Fred Fenster. The selection committee included Jamie Bennett (SUNY, New Paltz), Andy Cooperman (studio artist), and Lynn Whitford (studio artist).

Six honorable mentions were also awarded to Frankie Flood, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign; Brooke Marks, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign; Christina Miller, East Carolina State University; Amie Plante, University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth; Anya Pinchuk, Indiana University, Bloomington; and Kristie Reiser, University of Wisconsin, Madison.

SNAG Awards Minority Student Grant

The SNAG Minority Student Grant is designed to encourage the continued contributions of ethnic minorities to the field. Sean Johnson, a senior at Bowling Green State University studying under Tom Muir, is this year's recipient. The jury included Lane Coulter (recent faculty, Institute of American Indian Art), Ron Ho (studio artist), and Christina Smith (California State, Fullerton).

Minority Outreach Grants to High Schools

SNAG, in partnership with the American Craft Council and the Manufacturing Jewelers and Suppliers of America, awarded four high school grants for the 2002-03 school year. Bethel High School, Bethel, Alaska, will host Tynan Becker for four days to teach "Pierced Work and Soldering." Anthony High School, Anthony, Texas, will host Helen Ellison-Dorian to teach "Exploration of Flower-pod Forms in a Brooch Format"; she will also teach "Body Sculpture" at Canutillo High School, Canutillo, Texas. South Carolina Governor's School, Greenville, South Carolina, will host David Jones, teaching "Enameling 3-D Hydraulic Forms." The jurors were Richard Mafong (Georgia State University), Daniella Kerner (Tyler School of Art), and Bruce Clark (Pima Community College).

top to bottom

Ken Bova, SNAG president-elect

Mary Douglas, new *Metalsmith* EAC member

Photo: Jesse Goode

Hye-Young Suh
Webbing Vessel Series, 2001
copper electroformed adhesive, paint
11 x 8 x 4"

Yuyen Chang
Pear, 2001
bronze, silver
4 1/2 x 2 1/2 x 2"

Sean Johnson
Study for Magnetic Glasses, 2001
silver, stainless steel, found objects
6 1/2 x 3 x 5 1/2"

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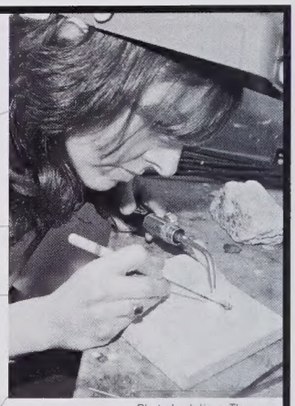

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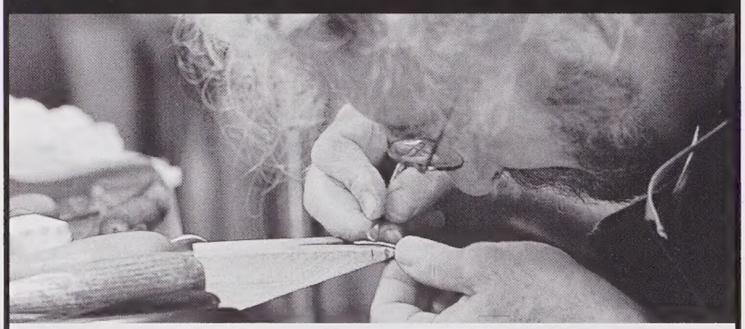

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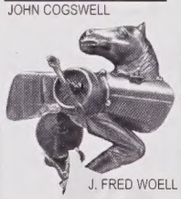

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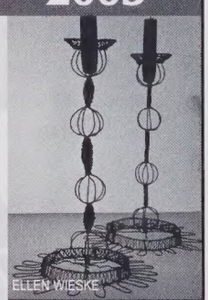

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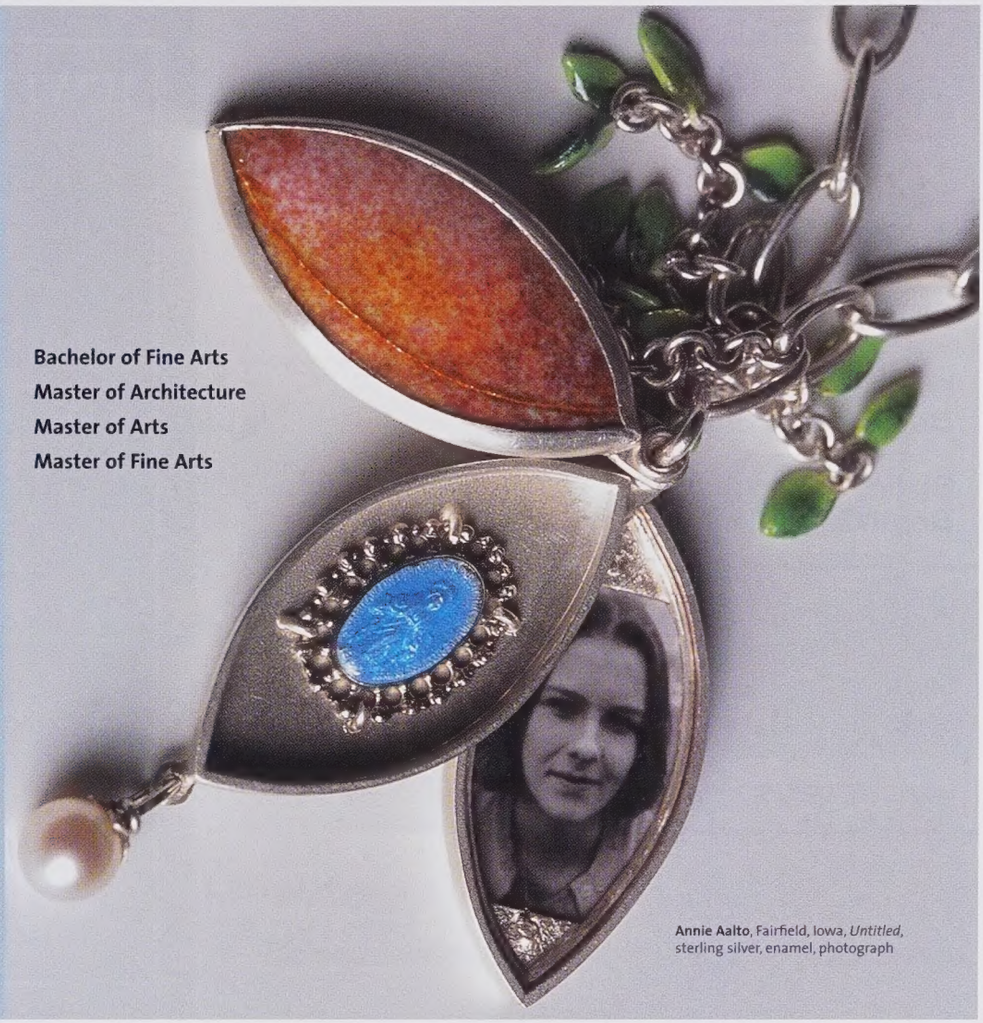

Annie Aalto, Fairfield, Iowa, *Untitled*, sterling silver, enamel, photograph

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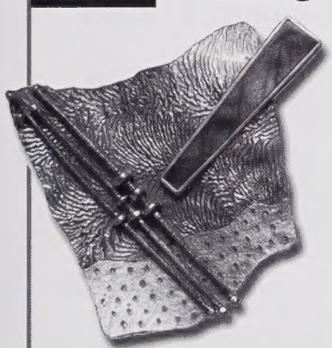

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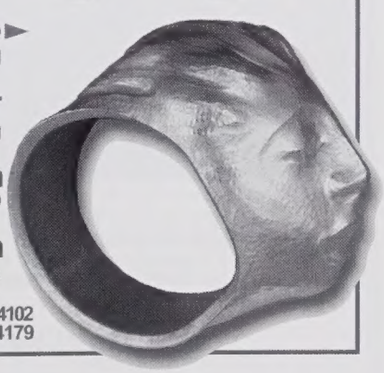

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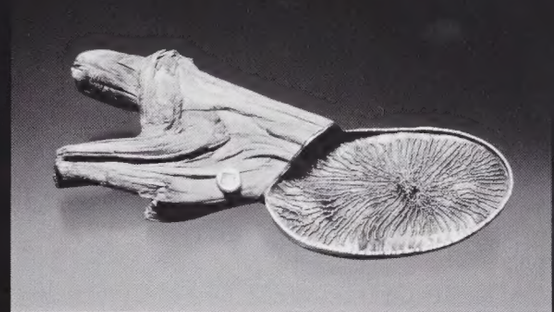

Harold O'Connor: *Pin*, silver, reticulation, 18kt gold, granulation, wood

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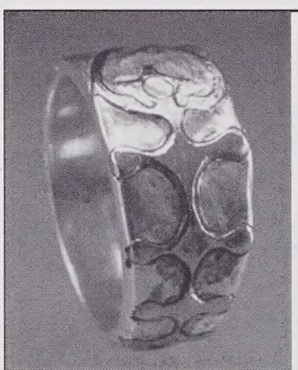
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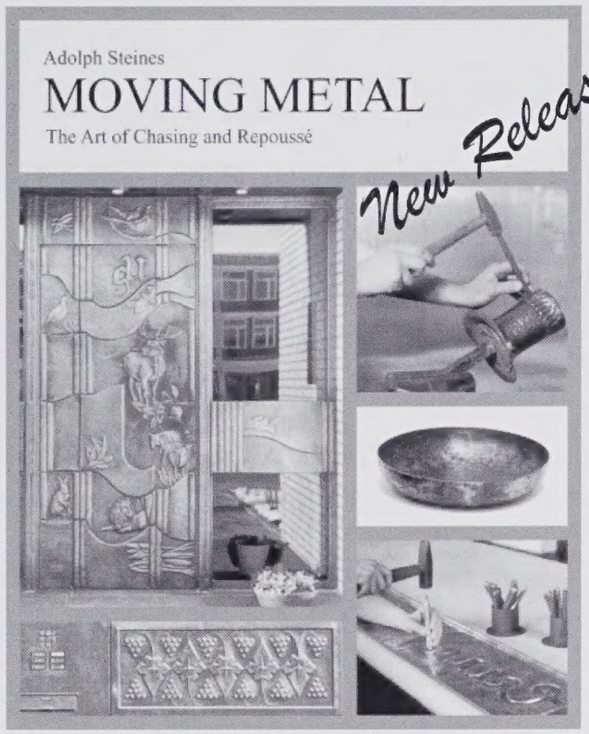

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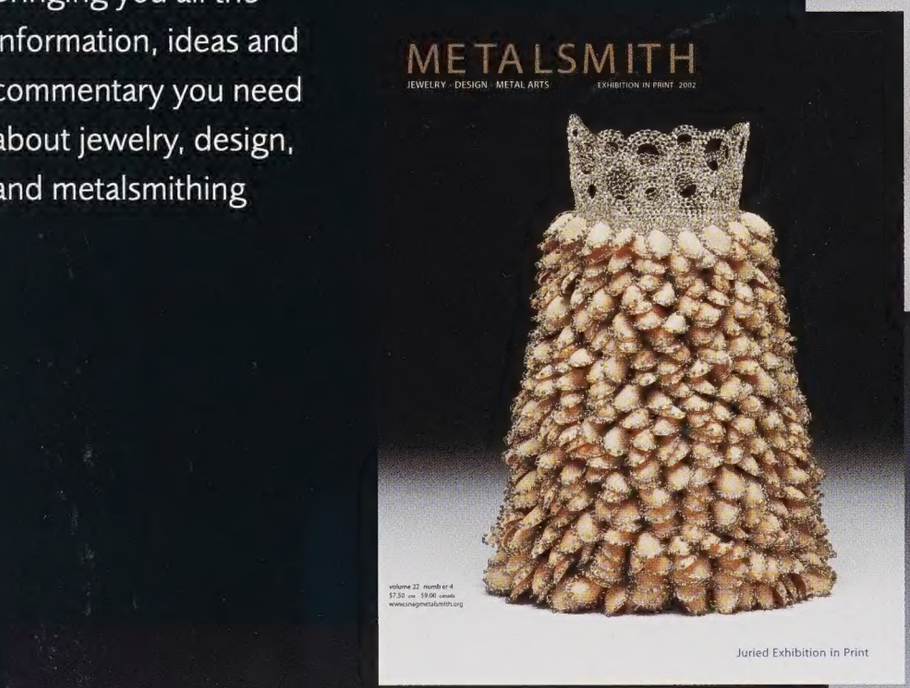

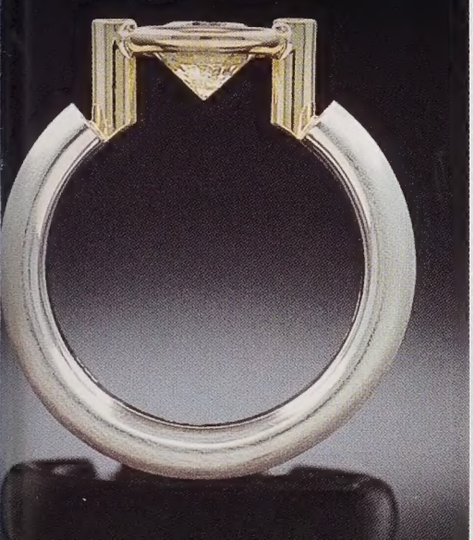

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opposite page, clockwise from top

Myra Mimlitsch-Gray
Cup with Oval, 1998
sterling silver
5 x 4 x 3"
Photo: Robert Storm

Biba Schutz
Ceremonial Pendant, 1998
copper, sterling, fine silver
4 3/4 x 1 1/4 x 1 1/2"
Photo: Ron Boszko

(EIP 2002 *Metalsmith*)
cover: Lindsay K. Rais
Stacked Basket, 2001
Photo: D. James Dee

Helen Shirk
Sustaining Sprit XXVII, 2000
copper, patina, colored pencils
6 x 23 x 23"

Whitney Boin
Post Engagement Ring, 1996
produced since 1988
platinum, 18k
Photo: Todd Flashner

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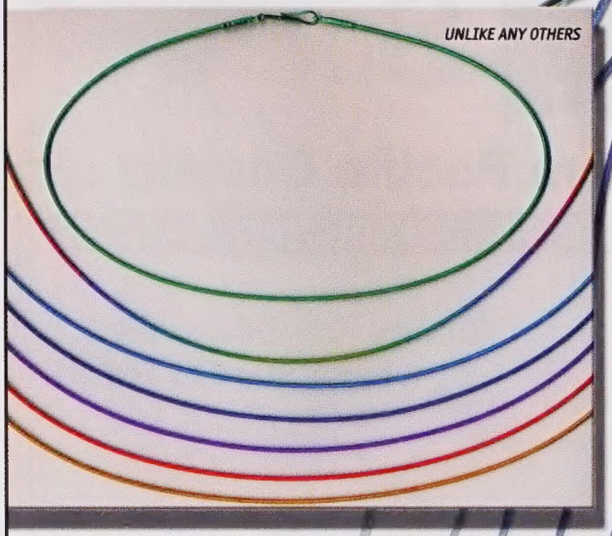

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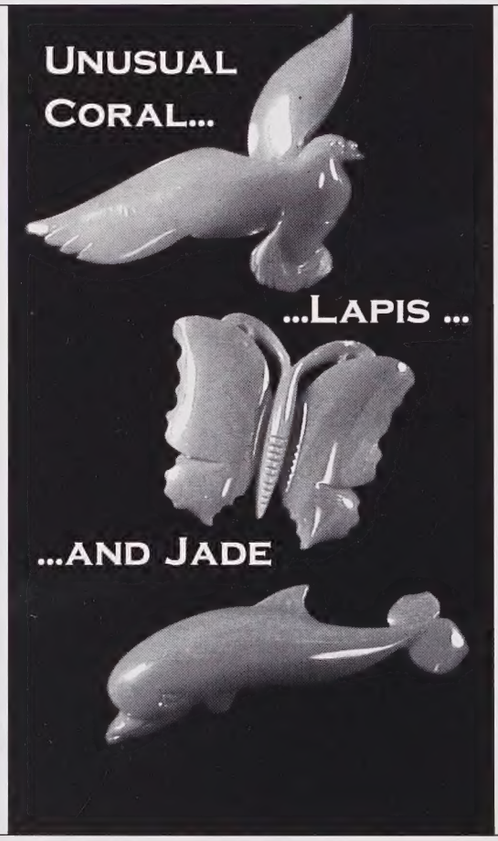

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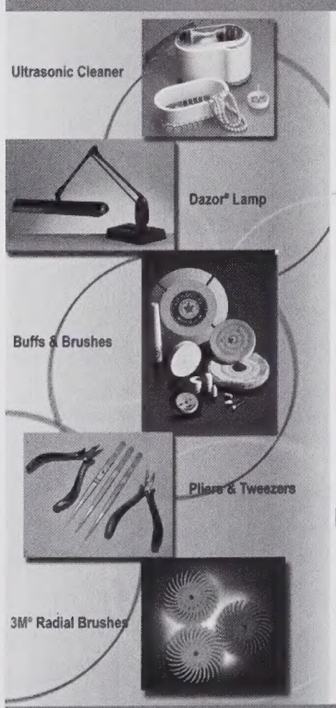

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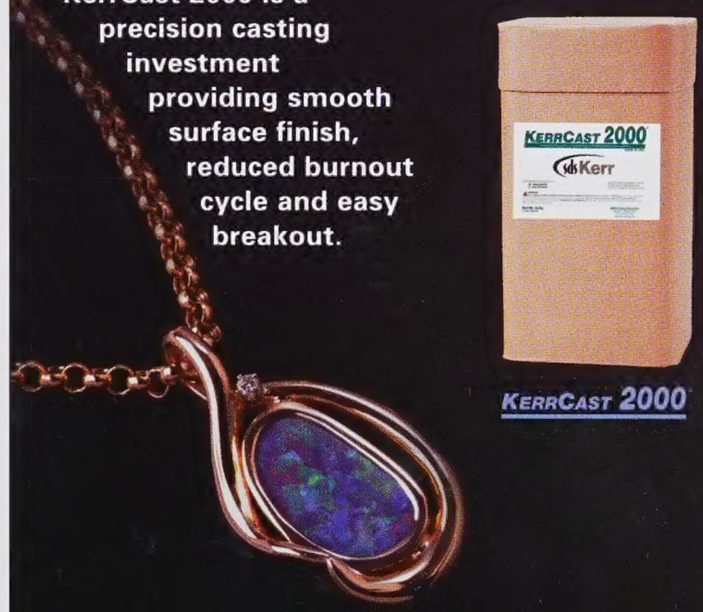

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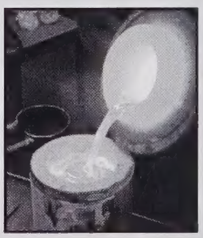

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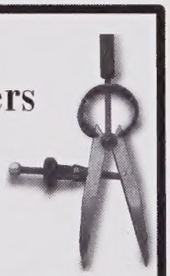

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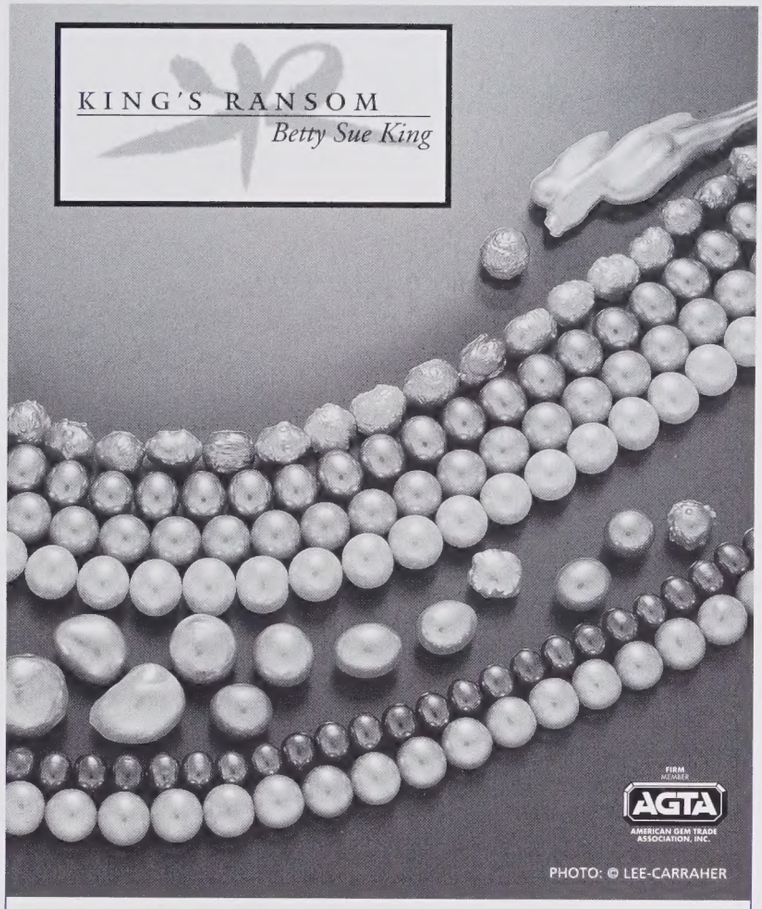
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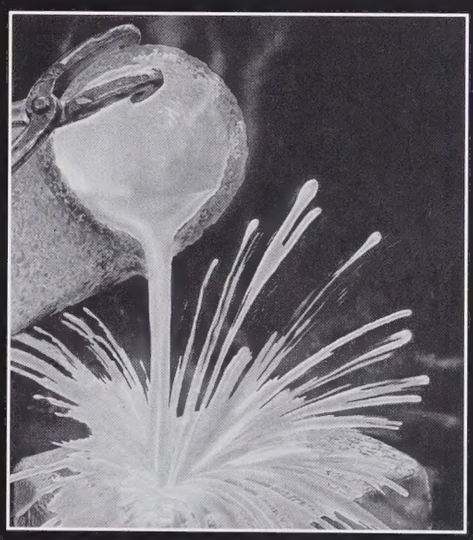
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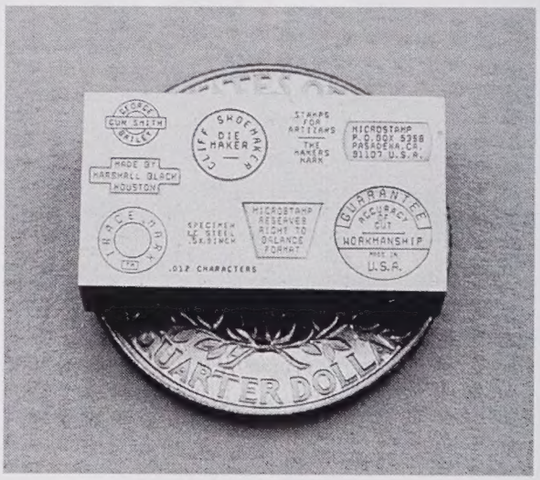

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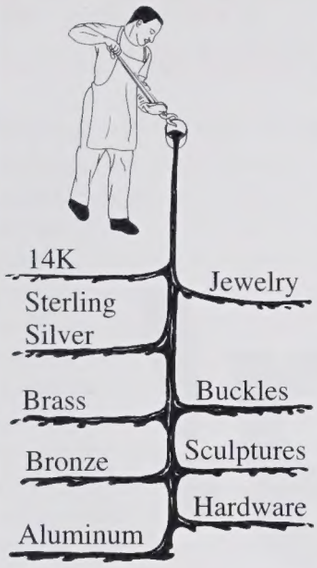

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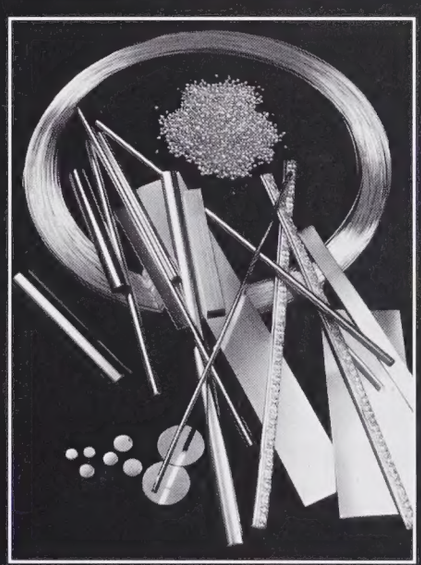

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Designed without compromise, these benches are the finest jewelers workbenches available. Built to be beautiful and sturdy, our solid wood workbenches are made in California by expert cabinet makers for jewelers, jewelry schools and jewelry workshops who demand quality tools. Standard features includes: stainless steel lined catch tray, two inch thick butcher block top, locking door with integral bur tray and two concealed security drawers plus six EZglide tool drawers. Available from stock or made to your specifications, in maple or oak. Shipped fully assembled.

Double Bank Custom Workbench
A larger work area with twice as many storage drawers as our standard John Frei workbench. Measures 62" wide by 26" deep and stands 38" tall. Shown in oak.

Bank of Drawers on Casters
These portable storage drawers are made by us to compliment the John Frei custom workbenches. Locking casters makes the bank of drawers easy to move around your shop. Shown in oak.
Measures: 18"W x 26"D x 38"H

John Frei Custom Workbench
Overall dimensions: Standard Design
49"W x 26"D x 38"H

Available Options
Simplified drawer lay outs for schools with individually locking drawers. Pull out layout board above locking door, pull out layout board beneath bench top, left hand bench, locking bank of drawers, custom finish/colors/or nude finish, block different locations, walnut or mahogany benches, GRS benchmate mounted in place of bench pin. Also double bank custom workbench. Contact us for your free full color benches selection guide. Or call for specialized design quote for your studio.

Detail *Four inch square hardened steel anvil block with bench pin, pull out tool tray with cut out for engravers block, two sturdy pull out arm rests, stain steel lined catch tray slides in and out.*

Detail *Locking top door with integral bur tray, two concealed security drawers, raised lip around bench top, two inch thick butcher block top.*

Two Station Custom Workbench
Popular for school and larger workshops. All the features of two separate John Frei workbenches with an added bank of drawers in the center. Shown in oak.
Overall dimension: 103"W x 26"D x 38"H.

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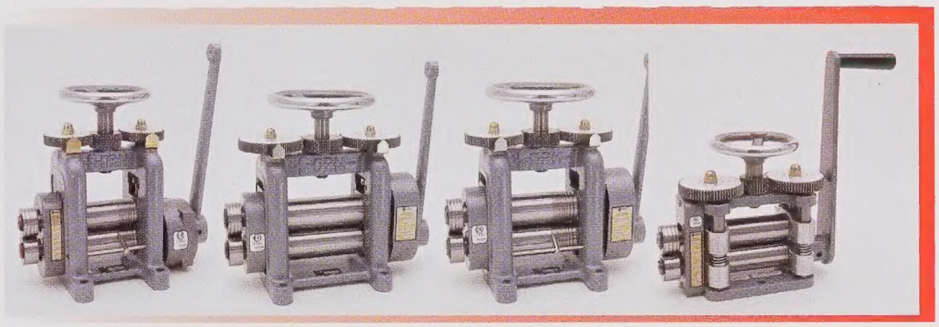

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With stand #128.115
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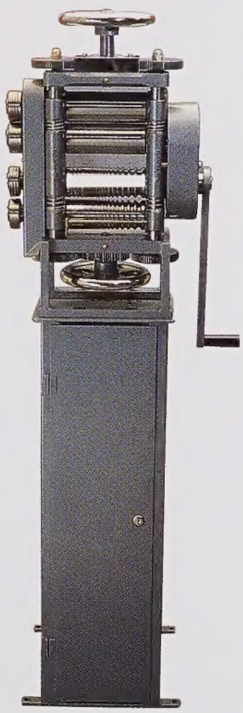

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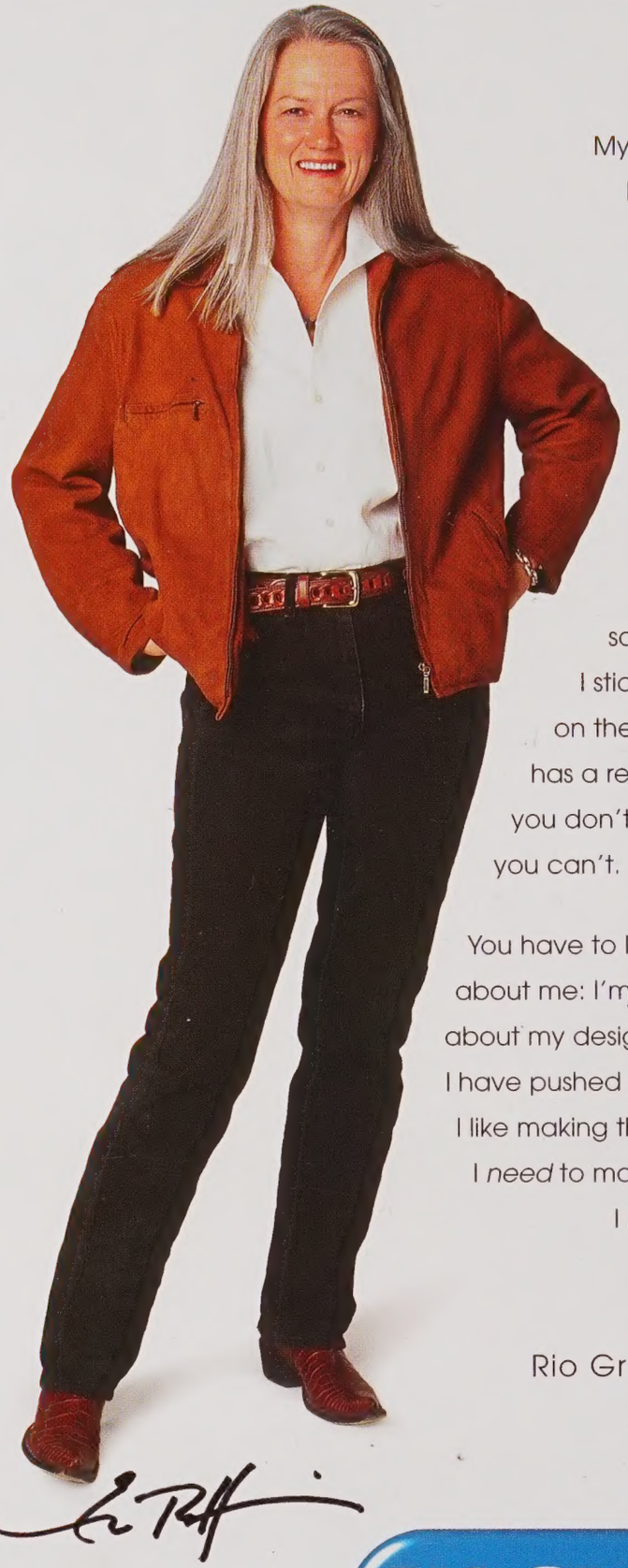

My grandfather was a doctor and taught me how to use tools. He'd bring home outdated surgical equipment and make it do something different. So here I was, this kid in Mississippi, tinkering around in my grandfather's workshop. I was so innocent. Now I'm a grown-up who still feels like she's five in this world of possibilities!

Historical reference and balance are important to me. I am very aware—in some innate way—of classical proportion. I stick to it. Classical proportion is based on the human body, so the finished piece has a real humanness. Without that, you don't feel familiar with it—you can't.

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